



- PAGE 26 -

About the awards

Springfield Business Journal and United Community Bank are pleased to sponsor this year’s “Best Places to Work,” recognizing outstanding businesses in central Illinois. The program is open to any business in Sangamon or Morgan county with 35 or more employees. Many of the nominations were submitted by the employees themselves, in other cases someone who had worked closely with the company made the nomination. While the awards are not based on the sheer quantity of nominations received for a particular company, multiple nominations from employees at various levels of the company help to paint an overall picture of the corporate culture. A company’s reputation and involvement in the community at large are also taken into consideration.

A reception and awards ceremony will be held in January at United Community Bank’s Montvale branch and Mayor James Langfelder will present awards to the three selectees. We appreciate United Community Bank’s ongoing support that allows us to honor these worthwhile businesses.



“Everyone here feels like they’re important and part of the success of the company.”

Julie Becker

Henson Robinson



“This company has a culture that is very much a family environment.”

Jean Winn

Horace Mann



“To say this is a nice place to work is an understatement. I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”

Lisa Bailey, LPN

St. Joseph’s Home

INSIDE
THIS MONTH



Lisa Clemmons Stott

p. 3



Pease’s at Bunn Gourmet

p. 5



Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

p. 12



Fehr Graham

p. 17



Hy-Vee Market Grille

p. 38

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PHOTO BY TERRY FARMER

Meet Lisa Clemmons Stott

Executive director, Downtown Springfield, Inc.

By Shannon O’Brien

As a senior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Lisa Clemmons Stott co-wrote a documentary called “Whatever Happened to Saturday Night,” about the demise of downtowns when malls became more popular. As the new executive director of Downtown Springfield Inc. (DSI), the documentary seems prescient. “I’m trying to bring Saturday night back,” she says with a laugh.

Her new role at DSI allows her to direct her energies toward revitalizing downtown Springfield. She believes a downtown is the face of a community and what makes a community special. “You should know when you’re in downtown,” she says. “There’s that character and uniqueness. You can tell the health of a city when you visit the downtown.”

She was invested in Springfield long before taking the lead role at DSI. “I’ve been talking and caring and building relationships in this community for a while now,” she says. Prior to accepting this position, she was selected by Mayor Jim Langfelder to be the

city’s design and planning coordinator. She also co-chaired the city’s Sustainable Design Assessment Team planning and action committees, and has been a member of DSI’s board of directors.

Clemmons Stott is a wife, a mom, a writer, a runner and a small business owner. She grew up just north of Bloomington-Normal in a small town called Chenoa. Her parents were both teachers and some of her favorite memories are going camping with her family and their teaching friends during summer breaks.

After earning her degree in broadcast journalism, she came to Springfield to participate in a legislative internship program that Sangamon State University – now University of Illinois Springfield – offered. It was while working in the legislature that she met Terry Lutes, then chief information officer of Government Information Services.

He became an important mentor to her. “The way he handled problem solving and creativity in government has definitely been a huge influence on my career,” she says.

Clemmons Stott owns Edgewise Consulting, a firm that offers strategic communications, public relations and fundraising expertise. In 2015 she was a nominee for New & Emerging Business Owner of the Year by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. She considers owning her own business one of her biggest professional accomplishments. “It was something I had wanted to do since my early 20s,” she says. She is project-oriented and enjoys learning new things, skills she knew would serve her well working with clients from different industries.

Her ability to take the long view of challenging projects keeps her focused – from

starting her own business to envisioning downtown Springfield crowded with visitors. “I feel like I can see something at the end of the road that I know I can get to,” she says. “I know there will be the proverbial road bumps but sometimes you feel passionate and you need to make it a reality.”

Her goal for downtown: a lot of people. “My ideal vision for downtown Springfield is the feeling of community and business and density,” she says. “What I want to concentrate on this year at DSI is the concept of foot traffic. That means when you’re walking around, you feel safe because there are more people there walking with you.”

As the new executive director for Downtown Springfield Inc., she is ready to work with the community to start turning the ideal into a reality.

“It’s up to us to make sure [downtown] represents a vital, living, breathing space.” □

Shannon O’Brien is a writer and photographer at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Perfecting the art of the print

By Eric Woods

Born in Indiana, Miles Parkhill moved with his family to Springfield when he was five years old. With the exception of a few summers spent in Florida, Parkhill has primarily lived in the Illinois capital. “It has a very affordable cost of living,” he said, regarding why he enjoys living in Springfield. One thing he does not generally enjoy is the small town mentality, and the current budget crisis has everyone upset.

As a kid, Parkhill wanted to be a rock star. He has been playing the drums for years, and his band Park released an EP a couple years ago. Eventually, the band wants to do a full concept album when they can find the time. His first employer was Chuck E. Cheese, and that was a good experience. “I was the game room attendant, and I got to dress up like Chuck E. once in a while. That job was very fun,” he said. Parkhill was also into rollerblading growing up and he credits former Springfield business owner Arlo Eisenberg for inspiring him to grow a business from scratch. “He owned the business Senate and just started out with himself and his friends. He was a professional artist and skater and is still out doing things for major retailers with his art.”

Parkhill started designing shirts as a hobby

for friends and local bands. In 1998 he started taking the idea of a business seriously. For the past four years his company has been in their current location. “We do screen printing of apparel, digital printing of signs and banners and embroidering,” said Parkhill. He can also put a company’s logo on just about anything, including pens, mugs and keychains.

Business is pretty steady throughout the year. December and January are normally the slower months, although this past January saw record sales for the month. “Usually we do a lot of planning in January when it is slow,” said Parkhill. Overall, though, business has been very good over the years.

If there is one piece of important advice Parkhill can give others who want to have their own business, it would be to have patience, start small and grow slowly. “You will not jump in and be successful right away. It took me 10 years to build this,” he said. “Take the time to target where you want to be, because it will not happen overnight. That is just not realistic.” He also warns against charging customers what can be procured as opposed to charging what a product or service is worth, as the latter will help keep a long-term relationship with the customer.

With the city basketball tournament

coming up, Parkhill will be busy. “We print for three of the four schools that participate,” he said. “We will promote it on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It is a lot of fun helping the kids see their designs come to life. They are proud to support their schools.”

In this unique industry, Parkhill sees business owners getting out when they get sick of the job. “This is not something where the equipment builds equity,” he said. “It is more about the property. I have bought some smaller shops from people who were just done. It is really hard to sell a company like this.” Parkhill knows he will not be quitting the business any time soon and is not even thinking about retirement.

As for the future, Parkhill wants to know that the world will be a safe place for his children. “As a new parent, I want to know what they will grow up with and experience,” he said. Parkhill also sees himself continuing the business for the next several years, hopefully growing his family, and finding that work/life balance. “I want to enjoy life to the fullest.” □

Eric Woods is a freelance writer from Springfield. He can be reached at ericw93@aol.com.

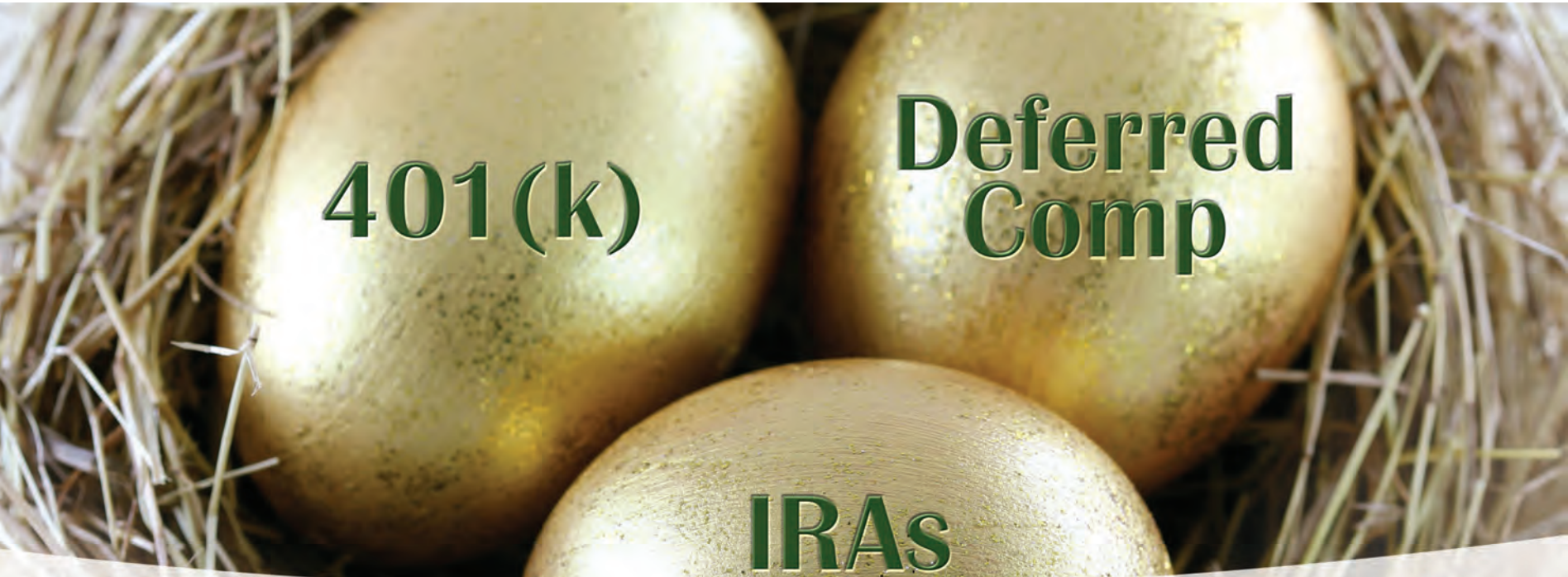


Miles Parkhill

Title: Owner, Miles T-Shirts LLC
Address: 2801 South Lowell, Springfield, IL
Education: Capital Area Career Center
Family: Daughter – Drew Elizabeth


Favorites –
Hobby: Disc Golfing
Movie: *Rad*
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PHOTO BY MARANDA POTTERF

Two great tastes

By Gabe House

Pease's at Bunn Gourmet has a little something for everyone.

Incredibly Delicious quiche and Bean Counter coffee are available for breakfast. Children have their own play and lounge area. Or at the end of a long day, perhaps a glass of wine paired with Pease's confections in front of a crackling fireplace is just the ticket.

"People like to come in and they're awestruck when they see our candy wall, but they also just like to hang out. It's been great," said Bunn Gourmet senior vice president Desiree Logsdon. "All kinds of different people come in for different experiences."

The retail outlet – Bunn Gourmet's first brick-and-mortar establishment – opened just last month in The Gables shopping center. A marriage of two of Springfield's most storied local businesses seemed like an apt opportunity.

"We like to call it a business partnership," Logsdon said. "A year ago, in August, we formed it with Pease's with the mission of infusing new life in the brand and updating those stores."

The previous Coldwater Creek location was in a prime west-side location, and the large space – more than 5,500 sq. feet – meant any number of possibilities could be realized.

"We said, 'this is more than a chocolate shop, so what else can we do?' It just made sense for these two great brands to come together," Logsdon said. "It created a unique and interesting environment for Springfield consumers."

Pease's at Bunn Gourmet has decadent displays full of pastries and candy. Colorful containers of confections are stacked from floor to ceiling. There are even gourmet steaks on offer. And, of course, there is coffee.

But this isn't the first time the two companies have been bedfellows, at least according to some. There are those who believed Pease's was kept afloat during the strict rationing of the depression in the '30s thanks to black market sugar supplied by the Bunn Capitol Wholesale Grocery Company. Those suspicions were never confirmed, though, and remain apocryphal.

There is no confusion, however, about

the process behind Pease's candy, thanks to the chocolate theater in the new Bunn Gourmet store. While some of Pease's candies are still manufactured in St. Louis, Logsdon said, they are slowly bringing that production back to Springfield.

"The theater is for customers to see it being made right there, fresh off the line, and the store is then stocked with those items," Logsdon said. "It allows people to see that magic of chocolate being made right in front of their eyes."

Logsdon likened the theater to being with Willy Wonka for a little while. Of course, that appeals to children (and a great many adults as well) but there are also attractions of a more mature nature.

A fireplace surrounded by comfy chairs and couches calls out to be enjoyed with a glass of wine or two.

"The fireplace is one of our great touchpoints to sit on a nice chair or couch and just relax," Logsdon said. "People seem to enjoy that space, for sure."

Pease's at Bunn Gourmet also has craft beer and has been in talks with local brewery Rolling Meadows to bring their beers to the store as well. The drinks can be accompanied by gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches, salads and the aforementioned quiches.

"We wanted to really look at local partnerships, and it's working out just as we hoped it would," Logsdon explained.

While it may seem odd at first blush to find one store with everything from candy to pastries to fine cuts of meat, the multi-faceted approach seems to be working, according to Logsdon.

"It's been lively. The space speaks for itself about what we're trying to do and the experience we're trying to create," Logsdon said, before she responded to the question of further expansion of Pease's at Bunn Gourmet. "That's the number one question I get. One store at a time! We love the Pease's brand and we love their traditional retail stores. We're also taking the items we're making now off the production lines and putting them in the other stores. It's getting that brand consistency before anything else." □

Gabe House is a freelance writer from Springfield.



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Honeypot or not?

Boutique store to accompany cannabis dispensary

By Colin Patrick Brady



Chris Stone stands outside the future site of his marijuana dispensary at 628 E. Adams St.

PHOTO BY CAROL WEEMS

Chris Stone is chief executive and spokesman of Health Care Illinois Alternatives (HCI), which is slated to open a medical cannabis dispensary at 628 E. Adams St. in March – but he has other joints in the fire. For one, he hopes to augment the dispensary with an adjacent boutique, tentatively named The Honeypot, in order to specialize in private label, non-cannabis products such as salves, lotions, disposable vaping pens, beverages, foods, oils and tinctures. The one fly in the ointment, according to Stone, is that the name may need to be reconsidered.

“There is a California agency that uses the name Honeypot too, and they have the rights.”

Not one to be dissuaded by nomenclature, Stone says that if it ends up that they can’t use the Honeypot name they will continue to move forward and “develop a unique name that associates with medically infused cannabis items and accessories.”

Regardless of the name, the two businesses will work hand in hand. “Essentially, we are looking to be a supplier of hemp-infused products and to serve as a place to get items you would not normally find elsewhere” Stone continues.

Stone, who is also principal of the lobbying and consulting firm Governmental Consulting Solutions, said that he first

became interested in the cannabis dispensary business in 2010 when a client asked him to investigate a potentially good market for investment. The relatively new and untapped potential of medical cannabis dispensaries seemed a good fit. Illinois passed the Medical Marijuana Act three years later in May 2013. The Illinois Compassionate Care Act lists 39 ailments for certification and treatment by medically approved cannabis.

Stone is optimistic about both HCI and the still-to-be-named boutique store, despite already having weathered a few regulatory hassles. “With any new state programs, you

run into hiccups in bureaucracy” he says, pointing out that the state has been helpful in implementing the dispensary.

Stone believes he is offering a solid alternative to highly addictive pills for those seeking pain relief as well as those facing other medical issues. “My store will help get people away from prescribed opioids,” he says.

For more information, visit www.mynewmeds.com or email Stone at emsmidwestllc@gmail.com. □

Colin Patrick Brady is a freelance writer in Decatur.

A Taste of Tradition...

In the 1940’s, Bernie and Betty’s Pizza was one of the best pizza joints on the Southside of Chicago. Seventy years later, owner Dave Stanks is learning as much as he can about the original owners. Their business must have moved to Springfield in the 1960’s, because, just like Dave, Betty was originally from Rochester, Illinois. Since 2011, Dave has prided Bernie and Betty’s on doing things the way Bernie did and uses his original recipes.

You might know the pizzeria for its famous thin crust and sourdough pizza, but the entire menu is made like your Italian mama made it. From the homemade pasta sauces, to the select hand-breaded appetizers, to the freshly-sliced meats on his poor boys and horseshoes – Dave has mastered the menu and makes everything from scratch. To see all they are serving up, search for the business on Facebook.

After owning a Subway franchise for 12 years, Dave values running a more “mom-and-pop style” establishment. He has been fixing up the historic building on South Spring Street and just put

in two big-screen TVs. He believes in keeping a clean restaurant and changes the oil in the fryers daily. He even cleans the newly-remodeled restrooms himself. As an “attention-to-detail” type of guy, Dave appreciates having an “attention-to-detail” type of bank, like First Bankers Trust Company.

Looking for a business loan, Dave was first introduced to Greg Curl of First Bankers Trust by a few fellow business owners. Dave appreciated that Greg seemed to take a genuine interest in his business and says, “Greg’s just that kind of guy! He’s an all-around great person.” With Greg being the president of the bank, Dave values that, “If something critical happened to me with my banking or my business, I can call Greg on his personal cell phone any time. That means a lot to me.” Now as a customer, Dave is happy to recommend First Bankers Trust to other business owners because, “I like small town banks, and they are a small-town bank with a big-city attitude.”

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Sangamon CEO to swim with sharks

By Brant Mackey

The 2015-2016 Sangamon CEO program is pleased to announce Sangamon CEO versus Sharks, a showcase of small group businesses that CEO students have been working on during the fall semester. In seven different groups, the Sangamon CEO students will present a business pitch of their ideas to local business investors from the Sangamon County area.



Sangamon CEO will host the event on Jan. 16 at the Memorial Center for Learning and Innovation (228 W. Miller St. Springfield, IL 62781). The event is open to the public and tickets are \$50 per person or \$30 for students 18 and under. Seating is limited. Part of the proceeds from the event will be used to finance new

businesses created by CEO students in their second semester. Tickets may be purchased from a Sangamon CEO student or online at sangamonceo.com. Checks should be payable to Sangamon CEO and mailed to 205 South Fifth St., Suite 930, Springfield, IL 62701.

A preliminary round will begin at 4 p.m., through a "shark tank" competition seven business ideas pitched by students will be reduced to three finalists. From 5-6:30 p.m., entertainment, food and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. The three finalists will start at 6:30 p.m.

Please use #CEOvsSharks to join the conversation for this event.

The Sangamon CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program is a collaboration between local businesses and school districts in Sangamon County. It is a year long, accredited high school class studying entrepreneurship by connecting students to business leaders and allowing them to experience the challenges and rewards of running a business.

Thirty-one high school seniors from nine different high schools in and around Sangamon County (Auburn High School,



2015-2016 Sangamon CEO Class.

PHOTO BY SARAH PETTY PHOTOGRAPHY

Edinburg High School, Lanphier High School, Pleasant Plains High School, Rochester High School, Sacred Heart Griffin, Southeast High School, Springfield High School and Tri-City High School) meet for class each day at a different business. Emphasizing real-world learning, actual business owners share their knowledge and experience with students

who can then utilize what they learn to create a real business with real money, including business and marketing plans which they present to bankers at the end of the school year. □

Brant Mackey can be reached at mackey@sangamonceo.com.

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It's all about the kids

The 100th anniversary of shrine giving

By Catherine O'Connor

2015 has marked the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Ansar Shrine, one of five temples in Illinois which serve as regional headquarters in Rockford, Chicago, Peoria, Springfield and East St. Louis. The Springfield Shriners chose the name Ansar and received a charter in 1915 in a ceremony with the blessing of the Illinois legislature. They have operated as a social and charitable fraternal organization continuously since then.

Springfield was a different city in 1965 when Ansar celebrated its 50th anniversary by building a new Shrine Temple near Sixth St. and Cook. A commemorative book published at that time included a congratulatory note from then-Governor Otto Kerner, himself a Shriner. He joined prominent doctors, lawyers and business and professional leaders totaling 850,000 members nationwide, with the common goal of raising funds to support the 17 Shrine Hospitals for Children.

During the postwar era, many

Springfield businesspeople joined fraternal organizations as a way to build networks and connect with other merchants and customers in the community. Today, with the advent of the Internet and other advances in technology, the purpose and culture around organizations like the Shrine has changed. What remains is the primary charitable function, supported by fundraising activities including Shrine monthly dinners, parades and family activities held throughout the year.

While many of us may not be able to make decisions about how our employer will donate or contribute to the community, the Shrine offers a structure that directs most of its member's donations to its network of specialized children's hospitals located throughout the country. Today there are 22 Shrine hospitals in the U.S. which have become world leaders in pediatric burn and orthopedic care. While such expert care is not free, it is provided at no cost to families because of the generous



Nobles Terry Petty, past potentate who serves as recorder, his son Rusty Petty, and current potentate Chuck McEvers, the Shrine's CEO, take their fundraising role seriously, but also appreciate the spirit of camaraderie found in Ansar's family-centered activities.

PHOTOS BY CATHERINE O'CONNOR

donations of Shrine members and their fundraising efforts. According to Chuck McEvers, who is the potentate or acting CEO of the organization, "nothing is more rewarding than to have someone stop you in the street and say that they or their child would not be able to walk now, if it weren't for their care that they received at a Shrine hospital."

Since 1990, the Ansar Shrine has hosted the Royal Haneford Circus, which is the longest recurring event held at the Prairie Capital Convention

Center. As Ansar's single most important undertaking each year, the planning and operation of the circus is now like a "well-oiled machine that only works with the expertise and labor of our members," according to Terry Petty, a past potentate who now serves as the recorder.

Numerous other fundraising activities over the years have involved the work of various ladies' auxiliaries and events that bring Shriners and their families from throughout Illinois together. For example, a fundraising sale of fresh Wisconsin

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The history of the Ansar Shrine was captured in a series of meticulously drawn early 20th century pen and ink drawings by James Bourquin, who was a member of the first Ansar band. This 1915 view from Fifth and Monroe Streets details Shriners parading through Springfield's downtown to celebrate Ansar's inaugural year.

cheese and a Valentine's Day "Love to the Rescue" emblem sale at gas stations and convenience stores were held to further support hospitals. Recently, the Shriners partnered with the Springfield Jaycees on a downtown pub crawl to benefit the St. Louis Shrine Hospital, which effectively used Facebook and Instagram posts to connect with those interested in being Shriners or being served by the Shrine.

According to Petty, this dedication to making fundraising efforts fun for Shriners has created a surprising force for good in communities. "We are proud that our hospitals have pledged to have every child who seeks care seen by a doctor within two weeks, regardless of the family's ability to pay."

Because modern media technology has enlarged individuals' capacity to reach worldwide, it makes time spent in live interaction more precious. From another perspective, a greater percentage of professionals in the community may no longer own or manage their own businesses, instead working for larger corporations that leave them feeling

isolated. According to McEvers, the Shrine membership includes people from a broad cross section of the community, who are united in the common goal of keeping the tradition alive.

One of the requirements to belong is that all Shriner members, known as "Nobles," are affiliated with a local Masons lodge. However, not all Masons choose to become Shriners, according to Petty. This works as an informal vetting process, because each Mason's lodge looks into the character and background of individuals before they are promoted to be a Third Degree Mason, an eligibility requirement to join the Shrine Temple. Petty points to the Masonic "obligation," which stipulates that members don't use their affiliation as a Mason or Shriner to promote themselves but rather adhere to the time honored tradition of "brother helping brother."

McEvers had a specific experience recently where his company, Great Western Trucking, needed product hauled to Memphis on short notice, and he was able to identify appropriate resources through his network of Shrine members. "If the person I'm talking to is a Mason or Shriner I know that I can trust their character. You like to support the people who support the same things you do."

While many people identify them as guys in funny looking fez hats, riding scooters in crazy parade formation, the Shrine actually offers many other activities that engage members, their spouses, families and communities. For the 3,100 current members of Ansar there are 31 local clubs for members who live in the surrounding communities, including the New Salem Shrine Club in Petersburg and 19 special interest units. Under this umbrella are a variety of ladies' auxiliaries and groups who serve as clowns, horsemen, or band members and marching units.

The new generation of Shriners is innovating with social media to encourage new members and make networking easier. There are growing number of clubs for active and retired law enforcement officers, those under 40 years old and those who are into brewing beer, according to Petty's son, Rusty, now himself a Shriner.

Both the younger and elder Pettys agree that the Shrine's time-honored message remains, "No one stands as tall as when they stoop to help a child." □

Catherine O'Connor wrote Message in the Bottle, a history of the early nineteenth century women's reform movement in Illinois.



The statue "Editorial Without Words," representing Shriners' dedication to children's hospitals, stands near the entrance of the Shrine Center at Sixth and Cook Streets.

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Business 72: Springfield's next economic engine

By David A. Kelm

Perhaps it is part of our collective consciousness even for those of us not fortunate to take the Great Family Road Trip as a kid. Regardless, there is an image in our mind's eye – a truly American image of Mom, Dad, kids, dog, luggage and a cooler of sandwiches and juice crammed into a station wagon and headed west or east or south (let's be honest, nobody went north except for that weird family a couple of houses down that always had a canoe strapped to the roof of the car and talked about how great the Minnesota Boundary Waters were in August).

For the rest of us, though, there was the Great American Family Road Trip. I, for one, spent a great deal of time sitting nestled amongst various pieces of luggage, feet on cooler, peering out the back of the Ford Country Squire (with faux wood-paneled sides), driving America. Spending

time in towns and villages along the route to check out a historic marker or battlefield or museum – you know, torture for your average 11-year-old. The traditional family vacation has evolved into today's destination vacations featuring either point-a-to-point-b travel along interstates or inexpensive air travel. Now, though – much like the storyline of *Cars*, the Disney animated story about a ghost-town along Route 66 – some in Springfield are looking to divert some I-72 traffic for a short detour through the heart of Springfield.

Alderman Jim Donelan of Springfield's Ninth Ward has launched just such an

effort, in the hopes that more travelers will take a moment or two and meander through Springfield rather than speed on by. The idea was shared with Donelan by Mark Hanna, executive director of Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport. "The business route has long been a way for cities to ensure travelers leave the interstates," Donelan explained. "When my family traveled we would look for business routes through town knowing that they were safe and would have amenities a family would be looking for."

Springfield has been home to the I-55 business corridor for years. The route runs

between Sherman to the north and Southern View to the south along 6th St., 9th St. and Peoria Rd. Business 55 skirts downtown Springfield as it runs along 9th St. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, Business 55 has a traffic count of 17,000 along the northern portion, about 25,000 coming into Springfield from the south and about 12,500 where it crosses Clear Lake at 9th.

The I-72 business corridor has not been fully mapped out and Donelan offered a couple of ideas for a linkage between east and west. "Business 72 has to follow a state route," Donelan explained. "To the east where 72 comes into Springfield at the Kmart, the route could travel along Clear Lake and Jefferson and turn south at Veterans." Other possible routes include MacArthur to Wabash and Walnut to Veterans for a cruise by the Airport Commerce Park. According to IDOT, the



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traffic count along the Clear Lake/ Jefferson portion of Business 72 is approximately 25,000 cars on average every day.

If Business 72 becomes a reality, Donelan contends that there is nothing but upside for Springfield. “Obviously, I represent Ward 9 and a good portion of Business 72 would be in Ward 9,” the new alderman admitted. “But a new business corridor for I-72 would go through seven different wards and benefit all of Springfield.” Directional signage could be added encouraging travelers to spin through town and increased traffic counts could lead to more businesses along the route. “More traffic means more business and the possibility of travelers voluntarily contributing to our economy, leading to a growing Springfield,” Donelan said.

The development of an I-72 business corridor is still in the discussion phases. Donelan has spoken to the IDOT district engineer and plans to have discussions with Springfield’s public works director Mark Mahoney. The designation of Business 72 resides with IDOT and a committee of sorts that handles official signage. “For the most part, Business 72 would not cost the City of Springfield a dime,” Donelan said. He has also discussed the idea with some in the business community and has received support for the idea. “Everyone I talk to about the designation can’t really come up with a downside. Maybe the worst thing would be increased traffic but I don’t see that as a downside,” Donelan concluded.

While Springfield does not have a Wall Drug or a Corn Palace (let alone the World’s



Jim Donelan, Ward 9 Alderman

Largest Ball of Twine) enticing travelers to leave the interstate and explore our fair city, we do have the Lincoln Museum, Lincoln Home site, Lincoln Depot, Lincoln Tomb and, of course, the all-powerful horseshoe sandwich. Travelers from the east and tourists from the west may soon see billboards beginning in Indianapolis and St. Joseph, Missouri calling to them to leave the mania of I-72 and take a leisurely cruise along Business 72 to see the sights, buy a tank of gas, gorge on a horseshoe and take in the fabric of Springfield. □

David A. Kelm is a Springfield area attorney. He can be reached at DavidAKelm@gmail.com.



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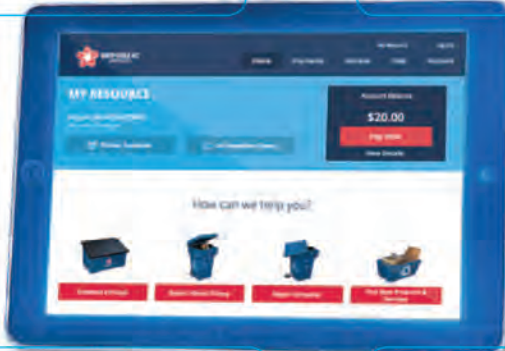
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SPECIAL SECTION:



Maurice Johnson, a student at Southeast High School, is part of the Grow Our Minority Participation program.

Homegrown engineers

By Roberta Codemo

Springfield Southeast High School junior Maurice Johnson wanted to be a pharmacist until he met Kevin Seals, chief environmental scientist at Hanson Professional Services, Inc. and the coordinator for the Grow Our Own Minority Participation program.

“Three years ago I had no idea what engineering was,” Johnson said, until he attended an open house for middle and high school students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Rail Transportation and Engineering Center. “It was super cool.”

Johnson was running up and down the campus and looking at everything, so Seals pulled him aside afterwards. “I want this so bad,” said the young man, who also attended the week-long summer program for rail and intermodal transportation at Michigan Technological University.

He can’t wait until he’s old enough to do a summer internship with Hanson and plans to attend the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he is leaning towards majoring in civil engineering.

Johnson wants to work at Hanson following college. “It’s one of the few companies that I know,” he said. “Plus it’s close to home.”

This is the spark of enthusiasm in engineering and science that the Grow Your Own program aims to foster in local minority students. “It’s been exciting watching it grow,” said Seals, who has seen a lot of interest from the community since the program’s rollout in 2014.

The two-year, \$60,000 program was recently renewed and is collectively funded by the city, county and Hanson.

It was designed to tie in with the Springfield Rail Improvement Project and multimodal facility. There has been a lot of public interest in increasing minority participation in the project.

“We didn’t know where to start,” said Seals, who said the program targets high-achieving minority students from middle school through college with interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to determine if this is the career path they want to take. He wants to expand the program to include a broader base of students in the future.

Students are recruited from local schools, minority-based organizations and individual referrals. The largest pool of students comes from local high schools, accounting for between 12-15 program participants. Students must secure a reference from someone familiar with their interests and submit a completed referral form to Hanson.

Hanson administers the program and works with minority-based community groups, businesses, colleges and universities, the Illinois Department of Transportation and others to connect students with organizations that offer STEM-related programs and activities. It offers mentoring, educational opportunities, job training and possible internships through its community partners to encourage students to pursue careers in engineering and related fields.

“There’s not a lot of minority interest in STEM fields,” said Seals. The program has 25 to 30 applicants each year, with a 70-30 breakdown between males and

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PHOTOS BY CATHERINE O'CONNOR

females. "The challenge is to identify students." Three high school students have participated in the Michigan Technological University summer camp.

Part of the reason, he thinks, relates to societal issues. "Students feel like there is a barrier and give up," said Seals. "They don't achieve their full potential." It disappoints him when he sees someone with a gleam in their eye but too afraid to venture down the road.

"I don't want to lose them because they don't think they can do it," said Seals, who encourages students to ask questions and to not take no for an answer. "We can open the door for you. Don't be afraid to knock."

The company selects three minority students each year for full-time paid internships, which helps students gain professional experience with the potential of future employment with the company. "We want to grow students locally and provide them with opportunities so they know they can come back home and that there are jobs available," said Seals.

To date, 10 students – six the first year and four last year – have applied for internships. The City of Springfield and IDOT have also hired summer interns from the program. Seals foresees a time, however, when there will be more positions than there are applicants.

Alex Diop, who is active in the Junior Frontier's program, plans to graduate from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville with a degree in electrical engineering in 2018. He strongly encourages anyone with an interest in technology and engineering to learn more about Hanson. "I love Hanson," he said.

His advisor heard Hanson was accepting applications and referred him to Seals. He's currently doing an internship and works under Robert Stidham, who is the IT manager at Hanson. Diop enjoys the work that he does.

"I've always had an interest," said Diop, who liked taking devices apart and putting them back together when he was younger. His counselors suggested he pursue mechanical engineering but he's always been more interested in electrical engineering.

His internship helped him his first year of college. "Everything made sense," said Diop, who was able to correlate his work experience with his classes. It made him a better student.

The program's success has inspired others. Seals has been engaged in conversations with CEOs at other local engineering firms who have expressed an interest in the program, which has received national attention. "We wanted to get some experience under our belt before we invited others," he said. Future plans include expanding the program to local and regional engineering programs over the next year and expanding the program into fields such as banking, finance, healthcare and retail.

The program has blossomed. Hanson recently opened a project resource center for the rail project at the City of Springfield's Office of Community Relations, 1450 Groh St., for post-high school minority adults. Individuals can learn about job opportunities and job training programs.

The program also works with minority contractors and helps them navigate the process of applying to pre-qualify as "Disadvantaged Business Enterprises" with IDOT so they can bid on construction contracts for the rail consolidation project.

"Everyone feels this is a great opportunity," said Seals. "It's a win-win for Hanson, the city, the county and residents." □

Roberta Codemo is a full-time freelance writer. She can be reached at rcodemo@hotmail.com.

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Questioning ourselves:

Is redevelopment of north mansion/Y block a job for outside experts?

By Catherine O’ Connor

In part two of our series about the power of historic preservation as a planning tool (“Walk this way,” *Springfield Business Journal*, December 2015), the 1970s demolition of Springfield’s historic Abraham Lincoln hotel – a multi-story, classic, beaux arts revival building that stood at the corner of Fourth St. and Capitol Ave. – was discussed. Recently, Springfield’s administrative officials, elected leaders, committee appointees and the public have all weighed in on the direction for future redevelopment of that same, now vacant block sitting north of the Governor’s Mansion, along with the adjacent former YWCA building. Both properties are now owned by the city.

Discussion over a measure that was tabled by the city council at its Dec. 8 meeting has brought to light differing philosophical perspectives. The larger question concerns how to build consensus about future planning in order to attract reinvestment in Springfield’s historic core. A proposal to hire Stantec, a national consulting firm, to

guide the process for selecting a developer for the prominent vacant block at Fourth and Capitol is popular with those looking for an outsider’s perspective. However, there are aldermen and members of the city’s Economic Development Commission who have expressed doubts that advice from yet one more outside consultant will be the answer.

It’s been more than 10 years since the city partnered with the American Institute of Architects’ Regional and Urban/Design Assistance Team of outside experts, allowing them to congregate in the capitol city to study the downtown area. Since then, there have been follow-up reports based on data from a residential housing needs study and a subsequent AIA report created by the Sustainable Design Action Team who visited the city in 2012. All have recommended mixed-use redevelopment with residential housing for the downtown area, including this block. So is it naive to think that yet one more group of outside experts will be able to create the desired

domino effect, resulting in more viable development?

In late 2014, a committee of citizens named by then-mayor Mike Houston began meeting to brainstorm and search for redevelopment strategies to address what has become known as the North Mansion/Y block property, bounded by Capitol, Fourth, Fifth and Jackson Sts., and its impact on downtown as a whole. The group, which included professionals from government, architecture, law, banking, business and real estate, discussed how to structure a process to attract reinvestment. After the group considered the effectiveness of various strategies, including a request for proposals, invitation to bidders or a public forum to attract potential development interest, the city issued the North Mansion Block Development Opportunity RFP in May 2015.

The RFP briefly described the city’s



The 2012 American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team report provided the City of Springfield a synthesis of data which recommended mixed use development to revitalize the city’s historic core area.

vision and need for a developer who would plan, design and execute a project that could include both commercial and retail spaces along with urban housing and potential green space in a planned development on the site, directly across the street from the stately Governor’s Mansion.

With the Central Area Tax Increment Financing District set to expire in December 2016, it was envisioned that a developer could

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be hired and monies allocated for the project this year, in order to take advantage of \$1 million in TIF funds earmarked for the project.

At the close of the RFP process in September, seven development companies, including two local firms, had responded. Their letters of interest varied in detail from one paragraph to several pages. Soon the city's economic development office determined that none of the proposals was sufficient and that officials needed further assistance to shepherd the process of articulating the city's requirements and to effectively manage hiring a developer for Springfield's first substantial downtown redevelopment project of this kind.

In October, current Mayor Jim Langfelder appointed a seven member Economic Development Commission, including citizens with expertise in real estate, building, development and finance. Their stated role included the review and recommendation of all TIF projects before a vote by the city council.

The city then approached Stantec, a publicly-traded technical planning and design firm headquartered in Alberta, Canada to submit a proposal to assist with attracting developers who might be qualified and interested in the North Mansion/Y Block redevelopment project. In a November 2015 letter to the city's economic development director, Stantec proposed to conduct a three phase planning and developer selection process, to be paid for with funding from the Central Area TIF.

The EDC first reviewed the proposal from Stantec at their Dec. 8 meeting, at which time they were notified that the city council would be voting that night on whether to allocate \$125,000 in TIF funding to pay for the consulting contract. At that evening's council meeting, members of the EDC, along with Aldermen Herman Senor and Cory Jobe, questioned the solicitation and whether the city had followed the proper procedure by not seeking approval of the EDC before submitting it to the full council. In addition, Jobe said he did not support the Stantec contract. "We already have several studies and received letters of interest from seven qualified developers. We just don't need it." The council ultimately tabled the motion.

The next day, the mayor scheduled a special meeting of the EDC for the following Monday morning. At a subsequent presentation by Stantec to the EDC on Dec. 14, members expressed several concerns about the developer selection process, direction and financial viability of this



The vacant lot north of the Governor's Mansion, which was formerly used for state employee parking, and old YWCA building behind it, have been largely forgotten until a recent extension of the boundaries of the Central Springfield National Register Historic District.

project, and questioned how to predict short and long term outcomes.

During the EDC meeting, Langfelder told the group that Mark Mahoney, director of the public works department, has advised that the YWCA building is not structurally viable.

However, Mike Jackson, a local architect who is also an instructor at the University of Illinois' graduate school of architecture, toured the building with architecture students two years ago, and determined the structure was not beyond repair then. At that time, the students prepared a material conservation report that was submitted to Paul O'Shea, who was then acting as the city's architect, according to Jackson. In addition, Karen Conn, an EDC member with significant expertise in adaptive reuse of historic buildings, explained that she and her husband had offered to help the city to secure the building to prevent further damage two years ago, but no one was interested. The current administration seems to believe that the YWCA building will need to be demolished as part of any future redevelopment at the site.

In addition to disagreement about the viability of rehabilitating the YWCA

building, there is also not consensus about how to best solicit proposals from developers. Commission member Brad Schaive stated that the city's Office of Planning and Economic Development has staff salary costs of more than \$600,000 per year, suggesting they should be tapped to handle this pre-development process. Other members pointed out that fees for guidance like that proposed by Stantec are common in municipalities without city planners or for similar projects previously carried out in other areas of the city, such as Enos Park or MacArthur Boulevard.

Schaive also expressed concerns about the requirement that Stantec might impose necessitating developers to disclose their financial information as part of the screening process. In his estimation, there are local developers who might have the ability to carry out the project, but who would not want to share financial information with Stantec.

In response to questions about the need for a third party to conduct the developer selection process, the mayor has said that the current economic development staff do not have the expertise or time to

properly carry out these tasks. "That would mean adding a full time position, which is something we would consider in the future," Langfelder said.

As for Stantec's fees, Langfelder explained that the company's original proposal was for nearly \$300,000 to guide the RFP planning and selection process, but he was able to reduce that by making them aware of four studies that had already been completed analyzing the demography, housing needs and financial viability of downtown, including this site.

OPED director Karen Davis, who worked with Stantec on projects in St. Louis in her former job, has stated that the actual price tag for completion of a development on the North Mansion block site could total \$30 million or more. She suggested that because Stantec is such large company with global experience it has a vast pool of resources from which to draw in areas such as pre-screening and verification of developers' financial viability and aptitude to handle a variety of public or private funding scenarios, including grants or federal tax credits.

Lisa Clemmons Stott, who recently left a position with OPED to become director of Downtown Springfield, Inc., also served on the North Mansion/Y block steering committee. Her perspective is that a powerhouse professional entity like Stantec may be what is needed to integrate this project into the larger vision of community revitalization. "We need to keep local people involved but can use an outside perspective to keep the dream alive and move forward with the amazing potential that came with the creation of the ALPLM," Stott said.

With the city's proposal to hire Stantec tabled for the time being, philosophical differences remain among those who think the North Mansion/Y block project will be key to further revitalization of Springfield's many vacant downtown offices and retail space. Does it call for professional expertise to help attract a sophisticated, enlightened developer who might offer a silver bullet, or is it more important to give local developers, designers and planning professionals, with interest in adaptive reuse and knowledge of our town, a chance to build a shared vision incrementally? □

Catherine O'Connor M.A. Public History is the former Manager, Local Government Services Division, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. She can be reached at catherineoconnor@gmail.com.

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1	Graham & Hyde Architects, Inc. 1010 Clocktower Drive Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-9380 217-793=6465 grahamandhyde.com info@grahamandhyde.com	5	6	Thomas J. Hyde, Jamie Cosgriff, Kevin Handy, Mike Zellers	Springfield, Ill.: Vachel Lindsay Elementary School; St. Agnes Church; Hoogland Center for the Arts; First United Methodist Church; Blessed Sacrament Church; Carrollton Bank; St. John's Lutheran Church expansion; Christ the King Parish Center; Cathedral of Immaculate Conception renovation; Ridgely Elementary School; Ball Charter Elementary School; Cherry Hills Baptist Church; Ben-Gil Elementary School, Gillespie, IL; Panhandle Elementary School addition, Raymond, IL; Ball-Chatham Community Schools additions and renovations; Campus improvements, Benedictine University.	1968
2	FWAI Architects Inc. 1 NW Old Capitol Plaza Springfield, IL 62701	217-528-3661 217-528=4717 fwai.com admin@fwai.com	4	13	Carl Fischer, Paul Wheeler Forrest Hoffman	Springfield, Ill.: Ronald McDonald House; Blessed Sacrament School Expansion, Central Illinois Community Blood Center, LLC A. Lincoln Commons, University of Illinois Springfield - various projects, H. D. Smith Corporate Campus, Sangamon County Building, Camp Lincoln - CSMS & Allied Trades, Crowne Plaza Hotel, INB Branches, St. Joseph's Home Dementia Wing, The Hope Institute - Learning Center & Master Planning, Memorial Medical Center - various clinics, Springfield Clinic - various clinics; Urbana/Champaign, Ill.: UIUC English Building Renovations, UIUC McKinley Health Center Remodel, UIUC Assembly Hall Remodel & Addition; Waukegan, Ill.: Regional Corporate Data Center; Texas: Corporate Data Center.	1976
2	J.H. Petty and Associates, Ltd. Architects 2920 Chatham Road, Suite B Springfield, IL 62704	217-787-2844 217-789=2855 jhp@jhpa.biz	4	8	Joseph H. Petty	Jr/high school addition for Virginia CUSD No. 64; admin addition for Thompsonville CUSD No. 174; Sangamon County Farm Bureau Headquarters; County Market Store, Pittsfield, Ill.; Remodel of Illinois Municipal League; Mid America Advertising Office Building; Cass County Court House Addition, Virginia, Ill.; Re-roof Pike County Court House, Pittsfield, Ill.; Classroom addition for West Lincoln Broadwell Middle School, Lincoln, Ill.	1994
2	Steckel-Parker Architects, Inc. 2941 Happy Landing Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-6444 217-793=5434 steckelparker.com dave@steckelparker.com	4	5	David E. Steckel	Springfield, Ill.: Brandt Consolidated offices, IL Primary Health Care Association, Central IL Kidney & Dialysis Association offices, United Community Bank - multiple facilities, Town & Country Bank - Wabash & Dirksen facilities, Group Home at The Hope Institute, Pepsi Distribution Center, West Central Bank remodeling - Beardstown, Military facilities - Sparta & Marseilles.	1964
3	Evan Lloyd Associates Inc. 1630 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-789-7011 217-789=7101 evanlloydarchitects.com tsmith@evanlloyd.com	3	13	Timothy B. Smith, Gregory I. Frazier	Springfield, Ill.: PCCC renovation and expansion, Engrained Brewery, Obed & Isaac's, Wm. Van's Coffee Shop, new Prairie State Bank, new FriarTuck, County Market, The Outlets of Springfield, new Sangamon County Health Department, Connor Co. new distribution facility, new Illinois State Police Federal Credit Union, State Capitol renovation, Waterways Building renovation, 4th Dist. Appellate Court, McGladrey & Pullen building renovation; Jacksonville, Ill.: New Pathway Services facility; Sherman, Ill.: New Illini Bank and Community Center. Maryville, IL: First Baptist Church additions; Eldorado, IL: Legence Bank corporate office building.	1969
3	Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker, Ltd. 213 1/2 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-789-9515 217-789=9518 mmlpltd.com architect@mmlpltd.com	3	10	Ralls C. Melotte, David J. Leonatti, T. David Parker	Jaenke Hall Renovation, Blackburn College; Toledo Estates Affordable Housing, Alton; Tinsley Dry Goods Shop Historic Reconstruction; Addition to Springfield Housing Authority Offices; Mt. Pulaski Courthouse Historic Site Renovation; School additions at Chatham, Heyworth; 1st Presbyterian Church Geothermal and Building Renovation, Jacksonville; 26 Affordable Single Family Houses, Taylorville and Stonington; New Matheny/Withrow Elementary School; 24 Unit Urban Park Place Renovation, Champaign.	1978
3	Allied Design Consultants, Inc. 405 1/2 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-3355 217-522=5570 alliedarch.com alliedsn@fgi.net	3	6	Bruce M. Bollero, Todd R. Hannah	Illinois: John F. Kennedy Middle School, Spring Valley; Public Library, Rushville; New Berlin Elementary School, New Berlin; Eureka School additions; ISU, LLCC, UIS and SIU renovation projects; Security Bank renovations and new construction; Casey-Westfield High School addition and renovations; Springfield School District 186 renovation projects.	1984
4	Ferry & Associates Architects 217 S. Seventh St. Springfield, IL 62701	217-522-4100 217-522=4122 ferryarchitects.com bferry@ferryarchitects.com	2	5	Donald E. Ferry, Bruce S. Ferry	Springfield, Ill.: Lewis Memorial Christian Village, various projects; Hickory Point Village, 47 bed and additional 17 bed additions; Washington Christian Village study; Springfield Developmental Center, interior renovation; PNC Bank, interior/exterior remodeling; Henson Robinson Zoo, new quarantine building; Old State Capitol, drum restoration; Howlett Building, historic plaster repair in Hall of Flags; Illinois Hospital Association, interior renovations.	1961
4	Walton & Associates Architects, P.C. 1227 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-5888 217-544=1851 waltonarchitects.com don@thewaltongroup.com	2	5	Don R. Walton, David McDow	Springfield, Ill.: Erin's Pavilion, Southwind Park, Springfield Park District; Jacksonville, Ill.: Illinois College - misc. projects; Georgetown, Ill.: First United Methodist Church, master planning Danville, Ill.: Danville Area Community College - Mary Miller addition and remodeling, Hoopeston Classroom Facility, Campus Architect; Lakeview College of Nursing addition and remodeling, Lakeview College of Nursing, Charleston and Danville.	1990
4	John Shafer & Associates 1230 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-744-9036 217-744=9039 shafer-arch.com john@shafer-arch.com	2	4	John Shafer	LLCC Taylorville, Illinois Education Association, Midwest Technical Institute, various locations, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Terry Farmer Photography, Illinois Baptist State Association, Yellowstone Shopping Center, Shelter Insurance State Headquarters, Novanis Building, Illinois Association of School Administrators, Gone for Good Document Destruction, Springfield Clinic Administrative Offices, Illinois Times, Bunn Corporate Office Building and Salvation Army.	1992
4	Cowdrey and German dESIGNED aRCHITECTURE inc 1305 Wabash Ave. Springfield, IL 62704	217-546-5730 217-546=5739 designed-architecture.com	2	3	Scott Cowdrey	Rolling Meadows Brewery, Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary, Nehemiah Expansion, Downtown Streetscape Enhancement - Litchfield, IL, Rexx Battery - Springfield and Jacksonville, Macoupin County Animal Shelter - Carlinville, IL, Nature's Grace and Wellness Center-Vermont, IL	2007
4	Square Root Architecture + Design 201 East Adams Springfield, IL 62701	217-903-5908 squarerootarch.com info@squarerootarch.com	2	1	Jeff Sommers	Caisley Residence - C3Prefab v1.0, Schulze Residence - C3Prefab v2.0, Huang Residence - C3Prefab v3.0, Leiman Residence - C3Prefab v1.1, 99k_House, Eco Prototype Residence, Bridgeport Residence, Edgewater Residence, Andersonville Residence, Glencoe Residence, Lincoln Park Residence, Jefferson Park Residence, Sylvan Melloul Salons, Cut Up & Dye Salon, SalonBlonde Hair Salon, OnShore Consulting Offices	2004




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Fehr Graham continues to expand

Acquires Coombe-Bloxdorf

By Eric Woods



PHOTO BY ERIC WOODS

Fehr Graham, an engineering firm started in 1973, has announced the acquisition of Coombe-Bloxdorf, a Springfield-based civil and structural engineering and land-surveying firm. The two companies are not strangers to one another as they have been on numerous project teams over the past few years. According to Noah Carmichael, principal and branch manager of the Rochelle office of Fehr Graham, the similar cultures of the two firms made the decision to acquire the firm an easy one. "While working side by side, we quickly identified many similarities between our two companies: strong leadership – highly knowledgeable and capable – and a strong focus on client satisfaction," he said.

This acquisition was not an overnight arrangement, according to Mary Coombe-Bloxdorf, former president and now branch manager of Coombe-Bloxdorf. "We had been in talks with Fehr Graham for the better part of the last year, considering the options and building a relationship to make the acquisition, and subsequent transition, as seamless as possible," she said. "The benefit of this opportunity with Fehr Graham is it allows me to focus

more on clients and projects, and less on the administrative responsibilities of an owner," she continues. "I have no immediate retirement plans, and my position with Fehr Graham will allow me the freedom to work as long as I desire while being more involved developing the future leaders of the firm and advancing the many exciting design projects currently underway."

Acquisition talks began in early 2015. As it became evident that the businesses were a good fit, the specific details quickly fell into place. "In the end, the majority of the time was spent early in the process to ensure each party was comfortable with the acquisition," said Carmichael.

The Coombe-Bloxdorf organization has similar experience to the civil and structural transportation capabilities of Fehr Graham's Springfield office but also offers experience in building structures, civil-site development and land surveying along with construction staking and observation services, according to Coombe-Bloxdorf. "These services align well with the Fehr Graham model and provided an opportunity to integrate the current staff with Fehr Graham's existing staff," she said.

Fehr Graham is the larger of the two companies, with 10 offices across three states. "The Springfield office is similar to our size and structure which I felt was a plus for my employees," said Coombe-Bloxdorf. "Fehr Graham as a whole offers a larger variety of services than those that Coombe-Bloxdorf has been able to offer in the past, which is an exciting opportunity for our staff."

Fehr Graham has successfully acquired numerous firms over the past decade. When the current owners of Coombe-Bloxdorf began considering a transition of ownership, Fehr Graham quickly identified an opportunity to strengthen their structural design team, while also providing a wider range of engineering and environmental services to the Springfield market. "This strategic acquisition will provide a platform for our other services not currently offered in the Springfield market," said Carmichael. "In addition to structural engineering and surveying, Fehr Graham will introduce services with a great track record in other areas of the state and throughout the Midwest. We believe the Springfield market has

opportunities with local industry to share our expertise in environmental compliance and remediation solutions as well as workplace safety, environmental permitting and site remediation."

According to Carmichael, Fehr Graham has an aggressive, long-term growth plan which balances existing marketplaces with an awareness of ongoing acquisition opportunities. Currently there are no acquisitions planned in 2016, but the leadership will continue evaluating ways to expand service offerings. "Past acquisitions have proven to be very successful, and we will continue to pursue acquisitions similar to Coombe-Bloxdorf which advance our growth strategy and provide a strong cultural fit for our organization," said Carmichael. "Overall, we are excited to be able to use this acquisition as a launching platform to expand and grow our presence in the local marketplace and provide additional structural engineering resources for clients throughout the Midwest." □

Eric Woods can be reached at ericw93@aol.com.

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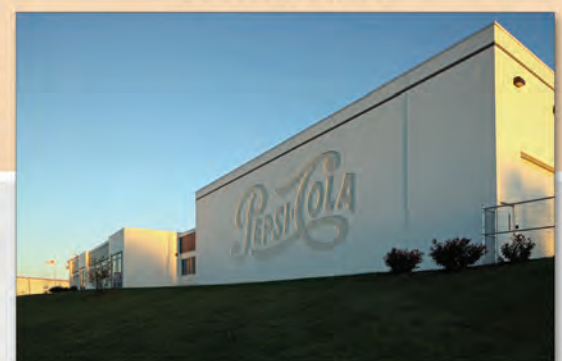
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Sources: The engineering firms. ¹Number of full-time employees in engineering division may vary from total employee count.

	COMPANY NAME ADDRESS CITY, STATE, ZIP	PHONE (-) FAX (=) WEBSITE (www.) EMAIL	EMPLOYEES LICENSED ENGRS	ENG. DIV.¹	PARTNERS/ PRINCIPALS	NOTABLE PROJECTS	YEAR EST'D
1	Hanson Professional Services Inc. 1525 S. Sixth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-788-2450 217-788-2503 hanson-inc.com marketing@hanson-inc.com	54	160	Sergio Pecori, P.E., CEO; John Coombe, P.E., S.E., COO; Robert Cusick, P.E., S.E., CTO; Jo Ellen Keim, CFO, CPA	Stratton Lock & Dam design for IDNR, McHenry, IL; Emiquon water control structure, Havana, IL; Commissioning for Sandy Grove Middle School commissioning (Cx), first net-zero school, N.C.; CWLP Spaulding Dam Spillway Gate Rehabilitation; IL High-Speed Rail Chicago to St. Louis program Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement; Springfield Rail Improvements Project; IL Tollway Interstate 90 (Jane Addams Memorial Tollway) widening and reconstruction; Kennedy Expressway reconstruction in Chicago; Indianapolis International Airport runway and taxiway rehab.; Alaska Railroad Corp.'s Northern Rail Extension Project; U.S. Dept. of State, Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) prof. commissioning (Cx) services on diplomatic facilities projects worldwide.	1954
2	Crawford, Murphy & Tilly Inc. 2750 W. Washington St. Springfield, IL 62702	217-787-8050 217-787-4183 cmtengr.com raustin@cmtengr.com	50	109	Dan Meckes, P.E., pres., CEO; Michael Doerfler, P.E., sr. vice pres., COO; Lou Dixon, P.E., sr. vice pres.	St. Louis Park Over the Highway at Gateway Arch; CWLP Cleanwell and Pump Station; Springfield Metro Sanitary District Plant Expansions, Memorial Hospital Expansion; Springfield/Taylorville Route 29 Improvement; UIS Student Union; World Sports Park, Indianapolis; Branson, MO Historic Streetscape; New Mississippi River Bridge Approach and I70 Interchange, St. Louis; Illinois Tollway Interstate 90 Expansion; O'Hare new Runway 10R/28L; New Passenger Terminal, Dubuque Regional Airport, IA; Airfield Rehabilitation Reagan National Washington Airport; Improvements at numerous civilian and military facilities nationwide.	1946
3	Hurst-Rosche Engineers, Inc. 531 East Washington Street, 5th Floor Springfield, IL 62702	217-523-4660 hurst-rosche.com dpool@hurst-rosche.com	31	62	James Roth PE, David Pool AIA, David Kimmle PE, Mark Reitz PE, Scott Hunt PE	Illinois Dept. of Military Affairs, IL Capital Development Board, IL; Department of Transportation, Springfield Housing Authority, Bloomington Housing Authority, Decatur Housing Authority, IL Secretary of State, New Marion High School, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, Western Illinois University, Southeast Missouri State University, Central Counties Health Center, Southwestern Illinois College, World Trapschooling Hall of Fame & Museum	1937
4	Hampton, Lenzini & Renwick Inc. 3085 Stevenson Drive, Suite 201 Springfield, IL 62703	217-546-3400 217-546-8116 hlrengineering.com hlrsfld@hlreng.com	30	75	Steven W. Megginson, P.E., S.E.; Michael D. Cima, P.E., S.E.	Illinois: Kane County bridge inspection and bridge management system, IDOT - D9 & D3 bridge replacements, IDOT - Cedar St. bridge evaluation, U.S. 61 bridge evaluation at Cairo, Kendall County - Eldamain Road over Fox River Phase I, Sangamon Valley trail designs, Tazewell County Manito Road over the Makinaw River Phase I & II, Will County - Briggs St. bridge, IDOT-D7 U.S. 51 Corridor Hydraulic Review of 50 Structures.	1965
5	Hutchison Engineering Inc. 1801 W. Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-7164 217-243-0468 hutchisoneng.com ghutchison@hutchisoneng.com	21	59	Gary L. Hutchison, pres.; Michael V. Meier, exec. v. pres.	Illinois: Macomb Bypass - Phase II McDonough County; I-80 Reconstruction - Phase I & II, Henry and Rocky Island Counties; I-57 / IL 50 Interchange - Phase III, Kankakee County; U.S. 50 Expressway - Phase I, Lawrence and Richland Counties; U.S. 30 Phase I, Kane and Kendall Counties; I-155 / I-74 Interchange Phase III, Tazewell County.	1945
6	Benton & Associates, Inc. 1970 West Lafayette Ave. Jacksonville, IL 62650	217-245-4146 217-245-4149 bentonassociates.com info@bentonassociates.com	16	40	Reginald H. Benton, P.E., S.E.; Jamie L. Headen, P.E.; William J. Sleeman, P.E.	Illinois: Jacksonville WTP Study, New Jacksonville WTP, Taylorville Water System improvements, New Taylorville WTP, US 67 Jerseyville Bypass, SNAWS rural water, Round Prairie rural water, Beardstown Sanitary District WWTP improvements, Jacksonville WWTP CSO, various IDOT projects, I-64 bridges - St. Clair County, I-55 Bridges - Madison County, McDonough County Transit Facility. Subsurface Engineering Services for High Speed Rail.	1970
7	Quigg Engineering Inc. 2351 S. Dirksen Pkwy. Springfield, IL 62703	217-670-0563 217-679-2204 quiggengineering.com lquigg@quiggengineering.com	13	52	Lori L. Quigg, P.E., pres.; Rebecca L. Stocker, vice pres.	IL 116 near Media - Ph III, I-90 from South Beloit Toll Plaza to Rockton Road - Ph III, I-55 and I-74 around Bloomington - Ph III, US 34 from Sandwich to Plano - Survey and Traffic Studies, I-55 & I-72 near Springfield - Ph II, I-255 & Horseshoe Lake Road - Ph II MOT, Various Survey projects with the Tollway, Survey for City of Champaign, Signal Design for City of Mokena and along Harlem Ave in Palos, various Traffic Studies for District 1, Supportive Services for Technical Assistance to DBE Contractors, NPDES for IDOT and City of Belleville, Environmental Assessments for Southern Illinois Fiberoptics, Environmental assessments for high-speed rail from Chicago to STL.	2006
7	WHKS & Co. 7018 Kingsmill Court Springfield, IL 62711	217-483-9457 217-483-9458 whks.com springfield@whks.com	13	24	Fouad K. Daoud, P.E., S.E., pres., CEO; Rick G. Engstrom, C.E.T., vice pres.; Michael A. Zelinkas, P.E., vice pres.; William K. Angerman, P.E., vice pres.; Scott D. Sanford, P.E., S.E., vice pres.	Illinois: I-72 resurfacing from Chatham Rd. to Morgan County Line in Springfield, Old McCluggage truss bridge repair in Peoria, Safe Routes to School project for Illiopolis, US 20 over the Mississippi River Approaches and Local Road Improvements, IBEW Union Hall in Springfield - civil & structural, IL Route 10 over Prairie Creek bridge replacement in Logan Co., Farmington Road re-alignment in West Peoria, Pawnee Road bridge rehab, IL 84 over the Apple River bridge replacement - phase I and II, Seismic analysis for the I-70 Tr-level interchange analysis near St. Louis, Cedar Street gusset plate strengthening in Peoria, Historic truss relocation in Bureau Co.	1948
8	Fuhrmann Engineering, Inc. 2852 S. 11th St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-5577 217-529-5575 www.fuhrmann-eng.com gfuhrmann@fuhrmann-eng.com	12	39	Gina Marie Cianferri-Fuhrmann, P.E.; Michael Dean Curtis, PLS.; Peter Wagner, P.E., PLS.	Jefferson Crossing Commercial Development; IDOT Various Bicycle Projects and Pedestrian Accommodations; IDOT Phase I and Phase II design services for the replacement of US 51 over Sugar Creek in Normal, Illinois; IDOT Phase III construction services for the High Speed Rail corridor from St. Louis to Dwight, Illinois; ISHTA Phase II for proposed roadway reconstruction, MOT for I-90 Jane Addams Memorial; Centennial Park	2002
9	Cummins Engineering Corporation 615 S. Fifth St. Springfield, IL 62703	217-726-8570 217-523-2312 cumminsengineering.com mike@cumminsengineering.com	9	20	Kimberly S. Cummins, P.E. CEO, Michael D. Cummins, P.E., S.E. pres., Philip L. Koerberlein, P.E. vice pres., Michael E. Rapier, PLS.	Fayette Avenue Bridge Replacement near Washington Park, Restoration of the Vachel Lindsay Bridge, Sangamon Valley Trail from Centennial Park to Stuart Park in Springfield, Veterans Parkway Intersection Improvements (dual turn lanes) at Old Jacksonville Road and Southwest Plaza Drive, Interstate 55 Bridge Improvements near Lincoln, Sangamon County bridges on Old Jacksonville Road, Farmingdale Road, Waverly Road, Roadway Improvements to Pleasant Plains Road and Waverly Road.	1998
10	HDR Engineering, Inc. 5201 S. Sixth St. Road Springfield, IL 62703-5143	217-585-8300 217-585-1890 hdrinc.com springfieldinfo@hdrinc.com	7	27	Matthew Cochran, Marketing; Lawrence Bellinger, Real Estate Services Section Manager	Land Acquisition, Utility Relocation, and Encroachments, including the current Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail Project; Freshwater and Marine Fisheries Production and Research Facilities, including Armstrong State Fish Hatchery, North Carolina; Wells Dam Hatchery, Washington State; and NOAA Cooperative Oxford Laboratory, Maryland.	1984

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10	Allen Henderson & Associates A Division of Veenstra & Kimm, Inc. 907 S. Fourth St Springfield, IL 62703	217-544-8033 217-544-3965 markh@ahaengineers.com ahaengineers.com	7	10	Bob Veenstra, pres.; Mark Henderson, P.E., S.E.; Christopher Kohlrus, P.E.; Gene Arnold, P.E., S.E	Springfield, IL: Chatham Road over Jacksonville Branch Creek, Drainage Improvements at Wabash Avenue and I-72, Central Illinois Community Blood Center, LA Fitness - White Oaks Mall, White Oaks Mall Renovation, Legacy Pointe Outlet Mall, Blessed Sacrament School Addition. Peoria, IL: IL 116 over Kickapoo Creek, Union Pacific Railroad, and Kickapoo Creek Road. Chatham, IL: IL Route 4 over Polecat Creek. Putnam County, IL: Curved Girder Bridge carrying IL 26 over Coffee Creek. Iowa: Iowa Christian Academy Athletic Center, John Wayne Birthplace Museum, Holiday Inn Exhibition Center, Des Moines Public Schools Aviation Facility.	1976
11	Andrews Engineering Inc. 3300 Ginger Creek Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-787-2334 217-787-9495 andrews-eng.com marketing@andrews-eng.com	6	45	Kenneth W. Liss L.P.G. pres., Douglas W. Mauntel P.E. exec. vice-pres., Bradley J. Hunsberg- er, L.P.G. vice-pres.	IDOT-Statewide Hazardous Contractor; IDOT-High Speed Rail corridor Carlinville to Dwight (construction inspection, health & safety, environmental); US Dept. of Veteran Affairs; US D.O.E.; multi-state landfill design, remediation compliance; Utility Ash management; RCRA, CERCLA, TSCA permits/corrective action.	1974
11	Fehr-Graham Engineering & Environmental 755 South Grand Ave. W. Springfield, IL 62704	217-544-8477 217-544-8483 fehr-graham.com mcbloxdorf@fehr-graham.com	6	19	R. Todd Weegens, P.E., Michael W. Gronewold, P.E., Ken R. Thompson, Adam G. Holder, P.E., Joel P. Zirkle, P.G., Noah J. Carmichael, P.E.	Civil/Structural Design: UIS Public Safety Building, ISU Watterson Dining Expansion, Normal, IL.; Civil Design: Lincoln Challenge Academy, Rantoul, IL; Mill Creek Estates, Phase 2; Kreston Place Subdivision; Springfield YMCA Site Development; Meadowbrook Road Extension; Structural Design: Lincoln Tomb Receiving Vault Rehabilitation; IDOT Hanley Building Plaza Waterproofing; Springfield Housing Authority Office Addition; Galesburg East Main Street Retaining Walls; IL 97 over Little Haw Creek. IDOT prel. eng. to rehabilitate 9 bridges on I-55 near Pontiac.	1992
11	Patrick Engineering Inc. 300 W. Edwards St., Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62704	217-391-3500 217-391-3501 patrickco.com cburger@patrickco.com	6	10	Dan Dietzler, P.E., pres.; Jeff Schuh, P.E., senior vice pres.; Chris Burger, P.E., vice pres.; Paul Lopez, P.E., vice pres.	Amtrak site modifications; Veterans Admin metering project; Smart Energy Design Assistance Center energy efficiency studies throughout Illinois; Solar Energy assessments; Livingston County wind farm evaluations; FutureGen Alliance carbon dioxide sequester project siting and environmental assistance; Edison Mission Energy Wind Farm construction assistance; Powerton powerplant rail and infrastructure upgrades; Tazewell County landfill evaluation and design; ICG coal mine infrastructure design and subsidence monitoring.	1979
12	Kuhn & Trello Consulting Engineers, LLC 630 E. Washington Street Springfield IL 62701	217-679-0044 ktengr.com kkuhn@ktengr.com	5	8	Kevin L. Kuhn, PE Michael J. Trello, PE, SE	New Railroad Overpass - Williamsville, IL Williams Place Sewer Project - Springfield II Straight Street Reconstruction - Southernview, IL Ricks Bridge Replacement - Christian County Highway Department Statewide Sign Structure Inspections - IDOT Municipal Park - Sherman, IL	2013
13	Prairie Engineers of Illinois, P.C. 6405 Canadian Cross Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-605-0403 217-718-4764 prairieengineers.com lkramer@prairieengineers.com	4	15	Lisa Kramer, PE; Darren Forgy, PE, PLS	All-Hazards Transportation System Vulnerability Assessment & Response Plan - Statewide; Lincoln Downtown Revitalization/Redevelopment Plans - Lincoln, IL; Allen Road Drainage Design - Peoria, IL; Ducks Unlimited Various Projects - Statewide; Shawnee Expressway Environmental Assessment and Preliminary Corridor Design - Southern Illinois; Pulaski Street Reconstruction, Lincoln, IL; Parking Lot Designs - Camp Lincoln, Springfield, IL; Pavement Testing - Statewide	2010
14	Professional Service Industries, Inc. (PSI) 480 North St., Springfield, IL 62704	217-544-6663 217-544-6148 psiusa.com bill.pongracz@psiusa.com	3	17	William Pongracz, P.E., vice pres.; James Gerloff, P.E., branch manager	Springfield Metro Sanitary District Spring Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, Enbridge SAX Crude Oil Pipeline, Springfield Clinic First North and Parking Ramp, St. John's Main Surgery and Patient Tower Renovation, Clinton Nuclear Power Station-Dry Cask Storage, Memorial Medical Center for Learning and Innovation, CWLP Dallman Unit 4 Coal Power Plant, Springfield High Speed Rail	1961
14	TRC Worldwide Engineering, Inc. 3200 Pleasant Run Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-2299 217-793-3311 trcww.com	3	7	Robert Boellner PE, vice pres.	University of Illinois Champaign/Urbana - various projects including Housing Life Safety Improvements, Burrill Hall Laboratory Renovations, Veterinary Medicine Building Renovations, Advanced Experimental Research Building, Eastern Illinois University various projects including a new building for Center for Clean Energy Research and Education, University of Illinois in Springfield various projects including Student Housing renovations, Cooling tower replacement, Sangamon Auditorium lighting controls, Illinois State University Capen Auditorium, OLOL Replacement Hospital, Lafayette, LA, New TESCO Stores in Turkey, UK and Poland, Parking structures for Martin Army Community Hospital Fort Benning, GA and VA Hospital, Dallas, TX.	1985
15	Finley Engineering 3015 Stanton Ave., Springfield, IL 62703	217-529-9362 217-529-9184 fecinc.com a.lowe@fecinc.com	2	16	Michael Boehne, CEO; Jeffrey Swan, vice pres.	Providing telecom related solutions to various market segments, including energy, municipalities and private entities.	1953
15	Martin Engineering Company 3223 S. Meadowbrook Road Springfield, IL 62711	217-698-8900 217-698-8922 martinengineeringco.com mecmail@martinengineeringco.com	2	14	Philip G. Martin, P.E., pres.; Steven R. Walker, P.L.S., vice pres.	Wabash Commercial Park, Green Certified West, Altorfer CAT, Oak Park Estates Phase 3, Calvary Church, Timber Creek Phase 6, Springfield Technology Park, Savannah Pointe Phase 4, Centennial Park Place Phase 5, CarMax, Cobblestone Apartments, Krispy Kreme Retail Strip, Dominos Pizza Retail Strip, City of Springfield manhole inspections, Ironbridge Estates Phase 2 and Cardinal Ridge (Chatham), Macon-Meridian High School classroom addition & new athletic fields, The Christian Village expansion (Lincoln), Geneseo School District new parking lot & synthetic turf football field	1982
15	Greene & Bradford Inc. 3501 Constitution Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217-793-8844 217-793-6227 greeneandbradford.com mail@greeneandbradford.com	2	13	Joe Greene, pres.	Illinois: City of Taylorville, storm sewer project 12" to 84" sewers; IDOT, district 3, hydraulic study; South Sangamon Water Commission, water main transmission design; Village of Pawnee, water main replacement program; Buffalo Dawson Mechanicsburg sewer commission, 3 sanitary sewer pump stations.	1972



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Building Springfield into a beautiful community

By Eric Woods

With the exception of a five year period in Chicago, John Shafer has lived his entire life in Springfield. He returned 30 years ago and likes the size of the town. "This is a good place to raise a family. It is easy to get around," he said. One thing he would like to do, though, is make Springfield a better place with more input on urban design in the city. One problem area he has seen is the lack of a vibrant downtown area due to the population being so spread out. The location of the University of Illinois Springfield and Lincoln Land Community College is an issue, according to Shafer. "I am disappointed in Springfield development. People do not always like to get in their car and drive everywhere."

Shafer always knew he wanted to be an architect, even at a young age. It was a book by Frank Lloyd Wright that helped him see his calling. "I made the connection that people were actually designing buildings. I thought that would be the coolest thing," he said. Growing up, though, he did have a number of jobs, including his first as a lawn mower and later on at Ponderosa. "That was my worst job and also my best. It was sloppy work, but I met some lifelong friends there."

With the exception of Ponderosa, Shafer has never worked at a company with more than 20 employees and is amazed at how the bigger businesses get things done.

John Shafer and Associates has been in

business since 1992. While the customer focus is normally Springfield and the surrounding areas, Shafer has also done business all over the country. The firm has four or five employees, depending on the time of year. Shafer prefers working on a variety of arenas, including office buildings, custom residential and education. "We do typical architect work," he said. "I do enjoy the variety of work over having a specialty. Business is pretty steady throughout the year." Shafer admits that he is busier when the economy is doing well.

The quality of projects in Shafer's portfolio is a result of Shafer himself seeking out and finding good clients. "We are fortunate to have nice projects on the boards. But we cannot do a really good project without a good client. It is a collaboration and a partnership," he said. Sticking to the basics of being honest, treating people fairly, and following through have helped in this process. "Traditional values will help you succeed."

Other means of succeeding in the world of architecture include finding a mentor, studying everything in the field and seeking travel opportunities, according to Shafer. "Use all of the resources available to learn as much as possible," he said. "Architecture is a pretty broad subject. You can compartmentalize since there is a lot out there. You can hone in on one aspect if

so inclined."

An interesting building-related hobby Shafer has taken on is working backstage and helping build sets for local community theater shows. "I was recruited into theater by my daughter, who does some acting," he said. Shafer has grown to admire the Springfield theater world for their passion and the time they put into their productions. He does note that building theater sets, which are lightweight, requires a lot less planning than the architectural world. "What I really enjoy is there can be changes up to the last minute. You can have more freedom and can be creative with the sets."

Being a father, running a successful business and being a good architect are just some of Shafer's greatest accomplishments. Looking ahead, Shafer hopes things stay in a prosperous manner and he still gets selected for the types of projects which he seeks out and enjoys. "I love designing buildings. For me, it's like I am a kid in a candy store," he said. Although he does watch how others go about retiring, Shafer plans to continue designing buildings exclusively but will likely delegate everything else to the others at the firm. "I just enjoy the design component the most." □

Connect with Eric Woods at ericw93@aol.com.



John Shafer

Title: Architect, John Shafer & Associates, Inc.
E-mail: john@shafer-arch.com
Education: B.S. in architecture and design from University of Illinois Chicago
Family: Wife – Cathy; Children – Shelley, Katie, and Emma

Favorites –
Hobby: Traveling
Movie: *Lonesome Dove*
Author: Alan Furst

Tidbits –
Plays tennis
Has a passion for music and loves going to concerts
Fan of all Chicago sports teams









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Veenstra & Kim acquires Allen Henderson and Associates

By Scott Faingold



Allen Henderson and Associates, Inc. provided the complete structural designs for the new headquarters of the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency. The core of the building is designed to resist forces produced by an F-5 tornado, ensuring the agency can remain operational if such an event were to occur.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEN HENDERSON AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Springfield engineering and consulting firm Allen Henderson and Associates, Inc. was founded in 1976. On July 1, the firm was purchased by Veenstra & Kimm, Inc., a company based in Iowa.

“While discussing possible teaming opportunities for projects located in the state of Iowa, the principals of both firms found their business philosophies to be very similar,” explained Mark Henderson, P.E., S.E. In addition, Henderson and Associates had been looking into expanding into the Iowa market while Veenstra & Kimm felt the same way about the Illinois market. The possibility of a merger seemed optimal.

“It worked great because we have primarily been a transportation and structural engineering firm designing buildings, bridges and highways while Veenstra & Kimm focuses on municipal

civil engineering projects,” Henderson said. In merging, both firms expanded their geographic markets along with the types of services they provide.

The firms are also similar in that both have very small marketing departments. Both view quality of work and repeat clients as the primary means of obtaining business, and approximately 95 percent of business is from existing clients. Both firms operate with low overhead, thus giving their clients a high quality service at a fair and reasonable cost.

In the Iowa market, the firm will perform more structural and transportation related work than it has in the past. In the Illinois market, the firm will perform more wastewater treatment, water distribution, storm water management, environmental, and other related civil engineering work. □



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Engineering affordable utilities

By Eric Woods

When he was growing up in Morrisonville, Doug Brown's parents owned a bar where he was able to watch and learn about hard work and dedication – the young Doug even helped out. "Their hard work and efforts owning a business and their dedication was a big influence. They worked from sunrise until late in the evening," he said. Brown put that knowledge of hard work to the test early in life. He worked detasseling corn in the wet, hot summers and also worked for Louis Marsh, Inc. throughout high school. "High school kids were hired to analyze oil, do viscosity tests, temperature and looking at the quality of the oil. It was an interesting job for a small town."

A continuation of that small town feel is what Brown enjoys most about Springfield. "It is still a big community but everyone is very friendly, cost of living is low and everyone can feel safe," he said. If he had to name one issue currently facing the city, it would be utilities and environmental regulations moving forward. "We want to keep energy rates low but also comply with regulations."

Brown has worked for City, Water, Light and Power (CWLP) since 1994, most recently functioning as the major projects director until this past May when he was

named chief utility engineer. Brown is now responsible for all utilities, including electric and water. He is also in charge of the finance department. "We want to ensure everyone has reliable water and electricity service at reasonable rates," he said. Making sure the budget and expenses are matched is very important, as CWLP can then invest back into the system. Recently there was a rate restructuring and a \$507 million bond sale was completed – the biggest bond deal in the history of Springfield.

Since 2008, according to Brown, the energy market has been inconsistent and he would love to be able to know where the market will be in the future. "It was pretty consistent when I started, but now the market has gone up and down a lot more," he said. Knowing the market prices and greater harmony with environmental regulations would help in the planning process as well. "It would be nice to plan over a ten year period, but new regulations can nullify strategic planning."

One major project still being pursued is Hunter Lake. Aldermen recently approved the revisiting of the lake, so according to Brown the project can now move forward. "It comes down to what is best for the community as a whole," he said. "This

could be a regional water supply and we would have the advantage of having a reliable source of water which could help attract future businesses. There are a lot of opportunities for the city of Springfield."

According to Brown, there is a shortage of engineers in the country, so anyone looking to get into the field should have a lot of opportunities. "Find what you are interested in and passionate about. There are different variances," he said. "Just put forward your best effort and things will work themselves out."

Brown looks to stay at CWLP for the foreseeable future. In ten years his children will be out of school and although he still has a number of years left, Brown feels that if everything falls in line he will retire at age 58. It's unlikely he will stop working, however. "I enjoy the utilities industry. There may be other opportunities in the future after retirement," he said. In the meantime, Brown and his family plan to vacation in Orlando in February – where his oldest daughter will just happen to be playing in a fast-pitch softball tournament for the University of Illinois Springfield. □

Eric Woods can be reached at ericw93@aol.com.



Doug Brown

Title: Chief Utility Engineer
Address: Municipal Center East, 800 E. Monroe
Education: MBA from University of Illinois in Champaign
Family: Wife – Diane; Children – Alexa, Hannah, and Ian

Favorites –
Movie: *The Great Escape*
Restaurant: Saputo's
Sports team: Fighting Illini

Tidbits –
Coached numerous youth sports including fast-pitch softball, baseball, basketball, and football
Wants to skydive
Enjoys traveling to the Caribbean



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The future of our past: the business of historic preservation

By Catherine O'Connor

This is the final segment of Springfield Business Journal's critical look at historic preservation as a community revitalization tool, and it reveals a positive direction for the future. Mike Jackson, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, has spent a good deal of his career helping people to understand the benefits of preserving tomorrow's historic landmarks, including the 1960s era subdivisions of ranch homes, steel towers of the '70s and concrete boxes of the '80s, which will soon join the honor roll list of America's National Register of Historic Places.

Amid news of Illinois' poor financial outlook, including the glaring lack of a state budget and dwindling bond ratings, there is a distinctive ray of hope twinkling on the horizon. For those seeking to renovate older buildings, the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) has been a highly successful economic engine for preserving buildings and revitalizing business in Illinois. The HPTC incentive yielded \$807.4 million in private spending on historic rehabilitation

projects and created 11,903 jobs in Illinois in fiscal year 2014, according to a study by the National Park Service and Rutgers University.

A coordinated program involving the National Park Service and the federal Internal Revenue Service, the HPTC is a 20 percent tax credit available to owners of buildings designated as historic and a 10 percent tax credit for non-designated historic properties, based on renovation costs for non-residential use.

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, (IHPA) which administers the program, has seen overwhelming success from its effort to help both developers and property owners qualify for federal tax credits to rehabilitate historic buildings throughout the state. In fiscal year 2014, the total private expenditures on historic rehabilitation projects that qualified for federal tax credits was higher than in any other state. Pennsylvania was a distant second at \$478.5 million in spending and 7,777 jobs, according to National Park Service data.

State government coffers also saw \$190 million in state, local and federal tax receipts

from the rehab projects. The IHPA estimates more than \$628 million more in rehab expenses will be spent by private firms on projects that are still underway.

To qualify for the Federal Historic Tax Credit program, building renovation projects must meet the National Park Service standards for rehabilitation. Those standards guide builders to keep the most important historic characteristics of the building while adapting spaces for modern use. Rehabilitation expenditures that qualify for federal tax credits include architectural and structural renovation, life-safety improvements and energy-saving upgrades, such as window repairs.

Statewide preservation advocacy group Landmarks Illinois has reported a rebound in the gloomy real estate market on the horizon, thanks to low interest rates, federal historic tax credits and more awareness of the significance of historic building renovation, which makes good business sense and has a ripple effect on the economy.

The federal tax credit does not cost the state of Illinois anything, but it produces

significant state and local benefits. Developers generally buy materials close to the project site and hire local workers to rehabilitate historic buildings, often requiring more workers at higher wages than new construction does.

Illinois projects that went forward last year using the federal tax credit included the new Virgin Hotel and an overhaul of the Wrigley Building in Chicago, renovations of Peoria's Hotel Pere Marquette, and revitalization of Rockford's Peacock Brewery.

The downtown Springfield landscape is dotted with evidence of successful preservation projects made possible with the federal tax credit, beginning in the 1980s when most of the entire block on the East side of Sixth St., from Monroe to Adams, was renovated. In the mid-1990s, the Chatterton Place development of multiple buildings on the southwest corner of the Old State Capitol square reinforced the trend to revitalize downtown. Efforts by preservation-oriented building owners continued the movement, as activist Carolyn Oxtoby worked to renovate the two historic buildings across from the



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new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Other projects on the horizon include the Ferguson and Booth buildings in the 500 block of East Monroe, enabled as a result of the National Register of Historic Places extension of the Central Springfield Historic District, which resulted in 83 more properties now potentially eligible for the tax credit program.

Christopher Nickell and his partners, Springfield developers with a track record in downtown renovation, have used preservation tax credits to transform turn-of-the-century storefronts at 409-411 East Adams, returning upper stories to residential units above first floor commercial space. Nickell's next project, the former Bridge Jewelry/Bentoh's site at 213-215 South Fifth St. will include three modern residential units above a new restaurant tenant at ground floor. The 30 percent tax credit rebate on an estimated \$260,000 in renovation cost is the bonus Nickell will gain from incorporating specific guidelines of the National Park Service into the design.

According to Mike Jackson, the tax credit program is an advancement that has enabled the preservation movement to progress from the 1970s and 80s fascination with antique buildings to the establishment of the Main Street revitalization approach in the 1990s, on to a wave of new millennium adaptive reuse as the holistic sustainability practice for rebuilding communities.

"When we look at the embodied energy coefficient of materials like brick, stone, solid wood and plaster, we now understand that the 'greenest building' is the one that already exists," Jackson said.

From a policy standpoint, the tax credit

financial incentive nudges the free market toward wise preservation decisions that will only be enhanced by cities incorporating mixed use zoning as an organic development strategy. According to Jackson, in Chicago all newly-built parking deck structures are required to incorporate first floor retail into the design. In St. Louis, a new library structure currently designed with upper level parking has been constructed with flexibility for future library expansion if needed, allowing for interchangeable evolution within spaces.

In terms of future trends that will impact community development, Jackson points to vast technology changes in the structure of the nation's economy wrought by energy source impact on global climate change. "We owe it to the future to start planning for an energy-restricted economy with visionary innovation now," he said. This will include thoughtful adaptive reuse planning to meet a changing demographic and future environmental sustainability requirements.

When asked to predict a vision for life in cities like Springfield in the next 20 years, Jackson points to driverless cars as the development which may create the most revolutionary impact on the work of urban planners. Prepare for engineers to reshape the city, with reconfigured intersections, transforming parking lots into city green space and parking tickets to become a thing of the past. □

Read more: <http://bit.ly/1k2Op0z>

The tax credit report is available at: <http://1.usa.gov/1modIMz>

Catherine O'Connor can be reached at catherineoconnor912@gmail.com.



A new restaurant tenant, soon to be announced, and two floors of residential space are on the drawing board for this development on South Fifth Street, courtesy of the federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program.

PHOTO BY CATHERINE O'CONNOR

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Daniel Hoselton and Steve Etheridge of Henson Robinson.

PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

One of the most coveted compliments an employee ever paid Dan Hoselton was telling him, “This is the best place I’ve ever worked.”

“That’s special,” said the president of Henson Robinson Company, located at 3550 Great Northern Ave. Hoselton has been with the company since 1990.

“There are people who come here and don’t leave,” said Julie Becker, who worked for the company in the 1990s and came back in 2003 when she heard there was an opening in the payroll department. “I was thrilled to come back.” She never really left because she had continued to work part-time assisting with inventory every year.

“There are very few who come and don’t like it,” she added, explaining how much she enjoys the spirit of cooperation found throughout the company. “We’re a group of people who were meant to be together. We were all very thrilled about the award.”

Becker credits this culture to her two very smart, well-educated bosses. “Everyone here feels like they’re important and part of the success of the company,” said Becker, who added when you have good management, it trickles down. “It makes you want to do better.”

Every May, employees receive a bonus. “It’s like a big pat on the back,” said Becker.

“We have a great, committed group of people,” said Hoselton, who was pleased to be recognized. “They’re a big part of our success.”

Henson Robinson rewards the hard work of its employees. Not only do they receive excellent benefits – 401(k), an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), health insurance and personal and vacation days – but the company also hosts summer picnics, an office Christmas party and a party for the workers in the shop, where the annual safety award winner is announced.

Employees are encouraged to work to

their full potential, and management creates opportunities for advancement and offers training programs. There are incentives to do a good job and better oneself.

The employee-owned company has been in business since 1861 when Henson Robinson, a friend and neighbor of Abraham Lincoln, was recruited to supply Union soldiers with tinware for the Civil War effort. Since then the company has earned its reputation as a leader in the roofing, architectural sheet metal, heating, cooling, ventilation, plumbing, mechanical and special sheet metal fabrication industries.

The company moved from its former location on Clear Lake Ave., where it had been since the mid-1960s, to its current headquarters about a decade ago. “We outgrew the location,” said Hoselton, who pointed out that their current site is three times larger than the old one, which Henson Robinson still owns. The company currently

employs between 150-160 employees, but that fluctuates based on the amount of work in progress at a given time and can number as many as 240.

In 2011, the company acquired Petersburg Plumbing and Excavating, LLC. “They were a longtime friendly competitor,” said Hoselton, who knew the company CEO. “They joined us under our umbrella.”

Project manager Brian Vogt, whose family owned Petersburg Plumbing and Excavating, joined the company as part of the acquisition. “Even though this is a not a family-owned business, it feels like family,” he said. “There’s a good dynamic from the two guys in the corner offices to the guys in the shop. It’s a good mix of people. Everyone has an upbeat attitude.”

Sheila Norman echoes that sentiment. Also a former Petersburg Plumbing employee, she was offered a position at Henson Robinson as an administrative assistant. “Even though this is a large



Henson Robinson is located at 3550 Great Northern Ave. in Springfield.



Laurie McCarthy, Holly Ferrill, Dana Blair, Ben Bell and Mark Patrick.



Brandon Dennis, Sheila Norman, Bob Esperum, Debbie Pichler and Stephanie Elder.

company, everyone knows everyone," she said. "Everyone enjoys being here and being together. I love my job here. I can't think of anywhere else I'd want to be."

Hoselton said everyone shares a commonality of purpose and works together for the common goals of the company and its long-term success. "We all own this company," he said. "If the company does well, we all do well. We share the good times and the hard times."

Several employees have been with the

company for more than 20 years. A recent retiree was honored for 40 years of service. "The people who work here are great," said Hoselton. "They're dedicated."

The number one priority for Henson Robinson remains customer satisfaction. "Without them, this doesn't exist," said Hoselton. The company's mission remains the same as in 1861:

"To provide and install quality products, backed with superior customer service and support. We strive to maintain this

dedication to ensure our customers' comfort and peace of mind throughout their place of work and residence."

The company also strongly believes in giving back to the community. "We live and work in this community," said Hoselton. "The citizens of this community do business with us."

Among the causes the company supports are the Salvation Army, Toast of the Town and Memorial's Festival of Trees. One year it donated a new roof to the Saint Martin

Deporres Center. "They're all great causes but we can't do it all," said Hoselton.

In addition, Henson Robinson's management team serves on union committees while employees are encouraged to become involved in funds and participate in their industries at all levels. "It's important to give back to the industries," said Hoselton.

These industries are always changing. "If you can keep the culture the same, the business will go the test of time," said Hoselton. □



Corey Johnson and Jean Winn of Horace Mann.

PHOTO BY GINNY LEE

Horace Mann (1 Horace Mann Plaza) aspires to be the company of choice to help educators protect what they have today and prepare for a successful tomorrow. “We believe in the community we serve,” said Marita Zuraitis, president and CEO.

“Public educators are a very worthy group of customers,” continued Zuraitis. “They have a calling and believe in what they do.” Educators need someone to look after their future. The company’s number one priority is taking care of its base.

Founded in 1945 by Les Nimmo and Carroll Hall, who believed teachers deserved quality, affordable auto insurance, the company employs roughly 1,100 employees in its Springfield headquarters and more than 1,500 nationwide. It serves more than 4,100 school districts.

“We are the only company in the

educator space,” said Zuraitis. Today the company has broadened its product lines and offers homeowner and life insurance as well as annuities.

The company was quite excited to learn it had been nominated as one of the Best Places to Work in Springfield but Zuraitis added it doesn’t change who they are. “It’s an acknowledgement that our employees feel the same way we feel about our mission,” said Zuraitis. “Everything starts with our employees. We have a lot of tenured employees.”

According to statistics provided by the company, 198 employees have been with the company 25-39 years, 24 have been with the company 40-44 years and five have been with the company for 45 years or more.

Corey Johnson has been with the company since 1997 and currently works

as a support tech in finance. “I love what I do,” he said.

He remembers as a kid that his neighbor, William “Bubba” Gamble, was employed here. “I would always ask him to get me an application.” He began working at Horace Mann as a shipping and receiving clerk after graduating high school. “It got my foot in the door.”

“We’re like a family,” said Johnson. “The people make it feel like home.” He was recently named employee of the month for his hard work, winning a trip to Mexico. “It made me feel good,” he said.

“This is a truly wonderful place to be,” said Jean Winn, who joined the company right out of college and has been here for almost 30 years. Her brother-in-law called her and told her there was a position available in fitness, which was her field of

study. From there she advanced to a group billing position and is now director of finance in human resources.

“This company has a culture that is very much a family environment,” said Winn. Indeed, it is common to hear employees referred to as the Horace Mann family. “It’s not just a place where you go to do your work and go home. There is a connection with this place.”

While she has had plenty of opportunities to leave, she has no plans to do so. “I don’t think I’d change anything at this point,” said Winn, who loves the team environment. “Everyone works together. It’s a collaborative effort.”

“We make a huge impact on educators,” she continued. Employees recently took lunch to teachers at Harvard Park School. One of the teachers got choked up, saying



PHOTO COURTESY OF HORACE MANN



PHOTO COURTESY OF HORACE MANN



PHOTO BY GINNY LEE

no one does things like this for them. “They take care of our future,” said Winn. “It’s a good reason to get up and come to work every day.”

The publicly traded company with nearly \$10 billion in assets is one of Springfield’s biggest employers and believes in supporting the community. “We make a huge impact,” said Winn.

“We’re good corporate citizens,” said Zuraitis. “We’ve always called downtown Springfield home.” The company has been

at its current location since 1972.

The company encourages its employees to become involved. “It creates a sense of community,” said Zuraitis.

Among the causes the company supports are United Way, the Central Illinois Food Bank and Toys For Tots. The company’s recent golf outing raised \$31,000 for the Springfield Public Schools Foundation.

The company also recognizes its employees. “We work very hard as an organization, and we play hard,” said

Zuraitis. Employees wear jeans on Friday and the company sponsors celebration parties. She hosts coffee with the directors and the employee of the year is announced at the annual employee recognition luncheon.

Horace Mann also offers a full array of benefits, which Zuraitis refers to as table stakes. “You can’t be a good company without them.”

Along with a flexible work schedule and promoting a healthy lifestyle, the company provides opportunities for advancement and

to do exciting work. Everyone brings their skills to work every day and this is recognized.

Employees have a voice. “They understand how to move the company forward,” said Zuraitis. They understand where the company is going and how they fit into the company’s vision.

“We plan to stay true to our history,” said Zuraitis when asked about future plans. “We plan to continue doing the same thing we’ve been doing for 70 years. It’s personally fulfilling to do something good.” □



St. Joseph's Home



Sister Lenore and Sister Patricia with staff at St. Joseph's Home.

PHOTOS BY GINNY LEE

Sister Lenore Highland was surprised to learn that St. Joseph's Home (3306 South Sixth St.) had been designated one of the Best Places to Work in Springfield. "I've always thought St. Joe was a great place to work," she said. "You never know how the staff feels."

She was further surprised to learn the nomination had been submitted by a former employee. "I was pleased she felt that way."

The nonprofit licensed nursing home, which currently houses 79 residents, has been a fixture on the south side of Springfield since 1925, following a move from its original location at Sixth and Lawrence, the current site of the Cathedral

of the Immaculate Conception. Sister Lenore remarked someone once called St. Joe "one of the best hidden jewels in Springfield."

At the turn of the century, Springfield resident Thomas Brady bequeathed \$17,000 to the Diocese of Alton to establish a home for the elderly. Bishop James J. Ryan asked the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Immaculate Conception at the St. Joseph's Home in Peoria to come to Springfield.

St. Joseph's Home opened its doors in 1903. Following the relocation of the See City from Alton to Springfield in the 1920s, Bishop James A. Griffin began a \$100,000 capital campaign to raise funds to construct a new St. Joseph's Home at its

current location.

Over the years, benefactors have supported numerous remodeling projects at the home. In 2008, the home raised more than \$4 million through a capital campaign to build an addition tailored to care for individuals with dementia.

Terri Hempstead, director of fund development and communication, writes, "Knowing that hundreds of people each year volunteer their time and contribute their money really is awe-inspiring. I saw the benefactors come through with amazing contributions to bring that vision to fruition. For someone to make a gift like that, they must really believe deeply in our ability to

provide high-quality and compassionate care for those who can no longer take care of themselves."

The word "care" is echoed again and again by administrators and employees. Sister Lenore attributes this to their success. "We care for them [employees] as individuals," she said. "We feel what happens to them is as important as what happens to our residents. We want to make them feel as important."

Carol Jackson has worked at St. Joseph's for 14 years in housekeeping. "We all get along," she said. "It's a great environment." She enjoys it when someone tells her she's doing a good job. "It's a pat on the back. I tell



St. Joseph's Home has been located at 3306 South Sixth St. since 1925.

the residents it's my job. It's what I do. "I'm here for the residents," she continued. "It's sad when one passes. It's like you lose part of yourself."

Sister Lenore expects the employees to care for the residents as if they were their own parents or grandparents. "I've always had a fondness for wisdom figures in our world," she said. The residents who walk our hallways once held a sense of purpose. "We respect them as seniors."

The staff is rewarded for their efforts in small ways. Each year the home hosts a Christmas party and employees are recognized on their birthdays and employment anniversary. After the annual Illinois Department of Public Health survey, everyone is treated to a pizza party.

Family members, staff and residents are invited to nominate an angel who walks among them and there is a drawing for a gift card. Employees with 10 years or more of service have a brick with their name on it placed in the garden walk.

There is not a high attrition rate. Nineteen employees have been there 10 or more years, seven for 20 or more years and three for 30 or more years. Sister Lenore credits this to the small ratio of staff to residents.

"You do this work because you want to," said Hempstead. She says everyone at St. Joseph's Home is like family. "There are mothers and daughters who work here, sisters who work here."

Hempstead, who had previously worked here for more than 13 years, recently returned when Sister Lenore called and made an offer of her old position. "There was no hesitation on my part," said Hempstead, whose mother is a resident.

The sisters have dedicated their lives to living in community. "They model a kind of

family relationship," said Hempstead. "The atmosphere encourages us all to respect and value each other."

Several employees remarked on the peace and serenity they find working here. "This facility is different from other long-term care places I've worked at," said LPN Lisa Bailey, who has worked here for 16 years. "To say this is a nice place to work is an understatement. I wouldn't want to be

anywhere else."

She loves the low-key, calm environment. "I have plenty of time to care for the residents," she said. "I get to know them."

Marge Hayes considers herself lucky to work here. Following a job loss, she was taking classes at Novatech when her husband called and told her there was an opening for a secretary. Her father was a resident here.

Seventeen years later she is still here and currently works as a receptionist. "It's the spirit here," she said. "There's a feeling of peace." She knows she's helping someone. "I help make this place their home."

"The sisters are cognizant that we all have to be a blessing to each other," said Hempstead. "When you work in a place where you know your boss is praying for you every day, it's different." □



Sister Lenore in the chapel at St. Joseph's Home.



United Community Bank's Best Places to Work in Central Illinois



2009 Hanson Professional Services, Inc.

Hanson is committed to a culture that helps their employees develop personally and professionally. Training, mentoring, coaching and sharing are all hallmarks of Hanson's employee-owned philosophy. Their focus on people means they offer flexible work arrangements, encourage open communication, and foster a team-oriented environment.

2009 Horace Mann

In return for the dedication employees show to the community, clients, and coworkers, Horace Mann offers numerous benefits, including tuition reimbursement, a flexible work week, and a company wellness program. Horace Mann has also implemented a variety of employee recognition programs.



Horace Mann



2009 Sikich LLP

Sikich offices are "open door" facilities where top level management strives to always be inviting and encouraging. Their diverse and friendly environment fosters learning, creativity, and the passion to grow as a professional. Decisions are frequently made in a team setting where the views and ideas of both management and staff are given consideration.

2009 Springfield Electric Supply Company

Springfield Electric offers employees the chance to work in a team environment with great people who are dedicated to satisfying customers' needs. Springfield Electric encourages community involvement; employees volunteer with a number of charitable organizations, mentor school children, and provide Christmas gifts for needy families.



2010 Brandt Consolidated

The Brandt culture supports real people core values and rewards forward thinking in an environment that feels more like an extended family than a corporation. Brandt is committed to promoting communication, self expression, and encouraging employees to reach their fullest potential.

2010 Lincoln Land Community College

Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) considers its employees as its greatest asset. LLCC offers a tuition reimbursement program that extends to immediate family and a unique "sick bank" for employees requiring additional time off. While LLCC offers competitive employee benefits, staff members feel most rewarded by the educational opportunities provided for students.



2010 Orthopedic Center of Illinois

OCI is dedicated to making all employees feel like part of the family by fostering a team based work environment in a state of the art facility. They offer flexible scheduling and employee recognition programs. OCI strives to offer employees a rewarding place to work by allowing them opportunities to give back to the community through many charitable organizations.

2011 BJ Salons Inc.

At BJ Salons, they feel education is the secret to their success. Owners, John and Gail Lorenzini, make company paid education and training a top priority to ensure all employees stay current in the latest trends and techniques. BJ Salon is also dedicated to helping their employees achieve a work-life balance by offering flexible work arrangements.



2011 M.J. Kellner Foodservice

Bill and Julie Kellner, owners of M.J. Kellner Foodservice, embrace the philosophy of treating employees like family. They make sure that every decision is made with the big picture in mind so that employees are looked after while keeping the business strong. The company recognizes and rewards employees by acknowledging birthdays, holding holiday parties and monthly company luncheons.

2011 Springfield Clinic

Springfield Clinic is in the business of caring for people, patients and employees alike. Their Commitment to Quality (CTQ) encourages employees to go above and beyond to enhance the patient experience. Springfield Clinic places a high priority on employee recognition. Employees are recognized with monthly "Employee Excellence Awards" and an "Employee of the Year Award".



2012 Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals values community involvement by establishing a philanthropic committee which designates funds to a variety of causes through the corporate giving program. This enables employees to help communities, organizations and individuals succeed on both an international and local level.

2012 & 2013 St. John's Hospital

St. John's Hospital believes that the power of people makes the difference in patient care. They strive to create a warm, family-oriented work atmosphere in order to provide the best possible care for patients. St. John's Hospital also provides the staff with the latest tools to deliver excellent care in professional and nurturing work environment.



2012 Systemax Corporation

Systemax prides itself on its reputation for quality, dependability, and knowledgeable service. The staff is encouraged to work with management daily to create a better customer experience. Systemax promotes a professional and fun work environment to encourage employee commitment to excellent customer service one solution at a time.

2013 Kerber, Eck & Braechel LLP

Kerber, Eck & Braeckel operates under 21 partners and principal owners and includes more than 130 professionals. Although KEB focuses primarily on public accounting and management consultant services, it offers a wide range of other products to its clients including, but not limited to, information technology, retirement planning and even investment planning services.



2013 Sacred Heart-Griffin

Sacred Heart-Griffin's inception came from the merger of Sacred Heart Academy and Griffin High in 1988. In that time, much has changed. The school has expanded with classroom additions, facility renovation and even a new multipurpose athletics stadium. But the core principle, the marrying of academic pursuit with a literal religious adherence, remains the same.

2012 & 2013 St. John's Hospital

St. John's Hospital believes that the power of people makes the difference in patient care. They strive to create a warm, family-oriented work atmosphere in order to provide the best possible care for patients. St. John's Hospital also provides the staff with the latest tools to deliver excellent care in professional and nurturing work environment.



2014 Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.

Levi, Ray & Shoup (LRS) cares deeply for the community, but also for its employees. They donate to a different charity each week and regularly give employees appreciation gifts. LRS has a full, on-site gym for its employees and their families to use that is accessible 24 hours a day and even cater parties for employees to spend time together outside of the workplace.

2014 Prairie Eye Center

At Prairie Eye Center employees are given time off to donate eye services to charity and to assist low-income patients at SIU School of Medicine. They are also encouraged to support each other through hardships and celebrate with each other in times of prosperity. They offer their staff a multitude of benefits to make Prairie Eye Center a unique and fulfilling work experience.

PRAIRIE EYE CENTER



2014 The Real Estate Group

The brokers at The Real Estate Group take the complicated task of purchasing a home and make it easy for the home buyer. They also donate time and resources to the community, volunteering with Springfield Sharefest to help local schools in need. The Group offers its employees flexible hours, a mentoring program, and a fun, light-hearted environment.

2015 County Market

The key to Niemann Foods success is its associate owners. Everyone is family, and this tone is set by Rich Niemann, Sr., company chairman. Niemann Foods, parent company to County Market, is a third-generation, independently operated, family-owned business. The company formally became an ESOP company 17 or 18 years ago, which Niemann said is the best thing they ever did.

CountyMarket



2015 Green Family Stores

Green Family Stores believes in giving back to the community. The company started the Green Family Charitable Foundation and every month writes checks to local not-for-profit organizations. Among the organizations they support are: The Matthew Project, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Sparc, Boys and Girls Club, St. John's Hospital and youth football.

2015 Springfield Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company

A fourth-generation, family-owned business, Springfield Pepsi sponsors little league teams, softball teams and other types of youth athletics. John Faloon, President, says, "If someone's kid is on a ball team, it becomes a Pepsi team. It's important to me if it's important to them." The company has been in the Vecchie family since 1941 and currently employs 75 people.



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UCB Marine: Augusta Carthage Hamilton | UCB BCSB: Golden Mt. Sterling

Illinois Stewardship Alliance awards Golden Beets to pioneering local food practitioners

Illinois Stewardship Alliance is pleased to announce the 2015 Golden Beet Award winners. The Golden Beets, now in their 5th year, are a series of awards created by the Alliance in order to highlight progressive local food practices and recognize the people who are pushing the local food movement forward in Illinois. The winners represent some of the most innovative practitioners and pioneers of local food throughout the state. "Through our work across the state we come across so many amazing people and local food projects, yet they often never receive the recognition they deserve. When people think of agriculture in Illinois they think of corn and soybeans

and often don't realize that there is so much more going on. We think of the Golden Beet Awards as a way to draw attention to the people and projects that are proving local food systems can work in Illinois and are leading by example," says Molly Gleason, Illinois Stewardship Alliance Outreach Coordinator. Illinois Stewardship Alliance solicits nominations from the general public in six categories: farm to school; community food projects; restaurants and institutions; innovative farmer; scaling up; and other varieties. The 2015 winners were awarded at the Illinois Stewardship Alliance's annual meeting on December 3. The winners were: Farm to School: Real Food at Northwestern University; Community Food Project: Cheryl Muñoz of Sugar Beet Food Co-op; Scaling Up: Marnie Record, developer of Lincoln Land

Community College's Value Added Local Food Program; Innovative Farmer: Dustin Kelly of Autumn Berry Inspired; Restaurant and Institutions: Big Grove Tavern; Other Varieties: Eden's Place Nature Center. More information about the winners and their photos can be found at www.ilstewards.org

Home builders associations install 2016 officers

For the first time ever, the Springfield Area Home Builders Association (SAHBA) and the Home Builders Association of Illinois (HBAI) combined their installation of officers ceremonies. The event was held Tuesday, December 8th and was performed by Ed Brady of Brady Homes, who will become President of the National Association of Home Builders in January. Not only does

this make history, but also shows how both associations are working together for the advancement of the home building industry. At the banquet, SAHBA and HBAI announced the new officers for 2016 and presented the following prestigious awards for exceptional work within the industry: SAHBA: A Presidential Citation was presented to Jim Lauwerens with United Community Bank and Steve Sturm with Truss/Slater; Member of the Year was presented to Becky Luzinski with Illinois National Bank; Associate of the Year was presented to Ryan Warden with Woare's Inc.; Remodeler of the Year was presented to Chris Mikus with Safeguard General Contracting; and Builder of the Year was presented to Dean Graven with Legacy Homes of Illinois. HBAI: A Presidential Citation was presented to Allan Drewes with Old Towne Custom Builders (NIHBA), Jason Huelsman with New Tradition Homes (HBA of GSWIL), Pete Stefani with Kings Court Builders (NIHBA), John Cooney with Cooney Corso & Moynihan, Heather Runge with Nicor Gas (NIHBA), Tracy Butler (EO of Greater Southwest HBA) and Lee-Ann Burgener (EO of SAHBA). In addition, Senator Sam McCann was in attendance and presented Fiore Belmonte of Prairie Insulation (2016 SAHBA President) and Dean Graven of Legacy Homes of Illinois (2016 HBAI President) with a Senate Proclamation. Visit www.hbai.org for more details.

Local home sales down, prices up

Capital Area Realtors report existing residential median home sale prices increased during November compared to a year ago as did sale pending properties while new listings, time on market and the number of homes sold declined. For November 2015, 218 homes sold, reflecting a decrease of 5.6 percent from the 231 homes sold in November 2014. Year-to-date home sales through November of 2015, totaled 3,488, reflecting a 2.1 percent increase over the 3,415 sales during the same time in 2014. There were 287 sales pending in November 2015, up 5.5 percent over the 272 sales pending during the same time last year. The 18 foreclosure sales in November 2015, represented 8.3 percent of all sales as compared to the prior November total which represented 12.1 percent of all sales. Average cumulative days on market for all home sales was 71 in November 2015, down from 78 days during the prior month and 86 days in November of 2014. Total housing inventory at the end of November 2015 reflected 1,350 listings representing a 4.3 month supply at the current sales pace. The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. reported the national average commitment rate for 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgages was 3.9 percent in December 2015, down from the 4.0 average rate during November of 2014. The Capital Area's Resource for Real Estate Information can be found at www.SeeHouses.com.

Chamber announces new 2016 board members

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce welcomed new board members at its annual board meeting on Dec. 8, including Ruby Davis, Ruby Funeral Services & Chapel, Inc.; Pamela Hart, Scott & Scott, P.C.; Bill Kienzle, Brother James Court; Mayor Jim Langfelder, City of Springfield; Dr. Charles Lucore, HSHS St. John's Hospital; Greg Matthews, Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc.; John McCarthy, The Horace Mann Companies; Lori Milosevich, Estes, Bridgewater & Ogden; and Lisa Clemmons Stott, Downtown Springfield, Inc. □



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Memorial Medical Center launches Advanced Hernia Center, partners with SIU HealthCare and Springfield Clinic

Memorial Medical Center has launched the Memorial Advanced Hernia Center to assist patients facing complex hernia cases. Dr. John Mellinger, a surgeon with SIU HealthCare, and Dr. James Fullerton, a surgeon with Springfield Clinic, serve as co-medical directors of the Memorial Advanced Hernia Center. “The concept behind the Memorial Advanced Hernia Center is to offer patients a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and outcome-focused approach to their hernia, including the related conditions and health issues that often accompany and contribute to hernia formation,” Mellinger said. The physician-referral center has 12 SIU HealthCare and Springfield Clinic surgeons, including the two co-medical directors, who will see patients. “There are all different kinds, shapes and forms of hernias,” Fullerton said. “Some of them can be very complex; they may have been repaired before on multiple occasions, aren’t healing properly, are infected or may involve bowel perforations. These are the kinds of complex cases that our surgeons are committed to repairing so we can strengthen the quality of hernia care in central Illinois.” The center provides a multidisciplinary approach including specialized services such as bariatrics, pulmonary, plastics, diabetic management, smoking cessation, physical therapy, advanced wound and stoma care, nutrition counseling and pain management. The center participates in the American Hernia Society Quality Collaborative, which seeks to improve hernia care delivered to patients through patient-centered collection data, ongoing performance feedback to clinicians, and improvement based on analysis of collected data and collaborative learning. For more information, call 1-844-3HERNIA or visit MemorialAdvancedHerniaCenter.com.

Horace Mann, HSHS St. John’s Hospital to open LeadWell Health Clinic for employees
Horace Mann and HSHS St. John’s Hospital have teamed up with HSHS Medical Group, the HSHS physician organization, to open an employer-sponsored health clinic in Springfield. When the clinic opens in early 2016, it will be located at 850 E. Madison St. – squarely between the two businesses’ campuses – in the HSHS Central Illinois Division (CID) building. The clinic will be open to Horace Mann and St.

John’s Hospital employees and their insured dependents at little or no cost, depending on the services needed. At a time when health care reform continues to evolve and costs continue to rise, employers are looking for ways to keep their workforce healthy while lowering health care costs. St. John’s Hospital is committed to improving the health of the community, including the colleagues responsible for providing care. “With a shared clinic nearby, sick and injured colleagues can seek treatment immediately instead of taking time off and scheduling a doctor’s appointment – or worse – ignoring their symptoms,” said Charles Lucore, MD, president and CEO of St. John’s Hospital. Mary Starman-Harrison, Hospital Sisters Health System president and CEO, shared this about the employer-sponsored clinic, “This clinic model is an innovative concept administered by HSHS Medical Group to offer local businesses easy access to high-quality health care. In this case, Horace Mann and St. John’s Hospital have partnered to pool our resources and open a shared clinic to benefit both workforces.” HSHS Medical Group plans to open additional LeadWell clinics in Springfield and throughout Illinois in the coming year. “Opening our first Springfield location with two of the city’s largest employers demonstrates the significant impact a LeadWell clinic will have on health care savings,” said Melinda Clark, HSHS Medical Group CEO. “Our goal is for other businesses to realize improved employee health and overall health care cost savings. We expect continued growth because of the countless advantages both to employers and their employees.”

Springfield Clinic Announces SC GIVES Winter Recipient

Youth Service Bureau was named the winter recipient of SC GIVES. Springfield Clinic chose the organization as the final recipient in 2015 because of their commitment to and focus on youth and their families in our community. Springfield Clinic is donating items needed for their Homeless Youth Program including a large collection of personal care items, body wash, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, 21 bed sheet sets and more than 40 pillows; cooking pans and utensils; and a wide selection of board games and DVDs. Since its creation in 1977, Youth Service Bureau has focused on providing comprehensive services to youth and their families aimed at the preservation of the family unit. Youth Service Bureau offers many

programs to help families and youth in need. In 2014, Youth Service Bureau provided services to 1,757 youth and their family members. This nonprofit was selected from among more than 100 nominations received since the SC GIVES program launched on Jan. 1, 2015.

SIU expands Telehealth clinics at Mason District Hospital

Patients in the Havana area now have access to a new way to see the doctor: telemedicine. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine’s Office of Telehealth and Clinical Outreach has brought clinical telehealth services to patients of Mason District Hospital in Havana. Through telehealth services, patients can visit Springfield-area medical providers using videoconferencing technology at Mason District Hospital instead of having to travel to Springfield. Patients will have access to more than 15 specialties. SIU Telehealth providers also deliver second opinions, follow-up care and consultative services to patients who have undergone or will undergo general or vascular surgery or who have suffered a trauma or stroke. In most services, insurance covers the cost of care or patients self-pay. Mason District Hospital officials expect that more than 10,000 people will have access to the services. Mason District Hospital serves Mason and Fulton counties and more than 30,000 people. Telehealth, also known as telemedicine, is the remote delivery of health care services and clinical information using telecommunications technology. Patients wishing to access telehealth should work through their local physician or SIU HealthCare at 217-545-8000. For a complete list of SIU Telehealth services, visit www.siumed.edu/telehealth.

Marshall Clinic Effingham, SC to merge with Springfield Clinic in 2016

Marshall Clinic Effingham, SC recently announced plans to merge with Springfield Clinic, effective Jan. 1, 2016. Marshall Clinic’s medical team is currently comprised of nine doctors and eleven advanced practitioners offering primary and specialty care in family medicine, dermatology, general surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics. The group includes Dr. Robert Frost, Dr. Jeffrey Jensen, Dr. Hope Knauer, Dr. David Kowalski, Dr. Lisa Kowalski, Dr. Jennifer Maneja, Dr. Jason McAllaster, Dr. Tina Rozene and Dr. Lana Schmidt. “The practice of medicine has evolved dramatically

over the past several years, and it has become increasingly complex to manage an independent medical practice like ours,” said Jason McAllaster, DO, spokesperson for the local physician group. “We carefully evaluated several regional partnership prospects and are confident that joining Springfield Clinic is the best choice for our patients and practice.”

In addition to its headquarters in Effingham, Marshall Clinic has served the region through a network of satellite offices in Altamont, Louisville, Neoga, Newton and Stewardson. The merger will establish Effingham and Marshall Clinic’s five regional offices as Springfield Clinic’s southernmost satellites in its service region. In addition to more than 15 medical offices in its Springfield hub, Springfield Clinic provides patient care through more than a dozen satellite offices extending from Lincoln to Hillsboro, and Decatur to Macomb. Current patients of Marshall Clinic can expect continuity of their medical care following the Jan. 1 merger. All Marshall Clinic medical offices will remain in their current locations, all local phone numbers will remain the same and all Marshall Clinic doctors and staff will join the Springfield Clinic team. Springfield Clinic will honor all Marshall Clinic’s current in-network insurance plans. Because the Springfield-based group is contracted with several additional health plans not currently accepted at Marshall Clinic, local patients will have greater access and additional coverage options. Both Marshall Clinic and Springfield Clinic utilize the same electronic health record system (Allscripts TouchWorks), which will allow for the seamless portability of current patient records, as well as the same patient portal (FollowMyHealth), which allows patients to conveniently and securely ask for prescription refills, request an appointment or send messages directly to their doctor’s office. Minor changes, including signage at all six locations, can be expected as the group prepares for the Jan. 1 transition. After the merger, patients can contact any Springfield Clinic location by calling 217-528-7541 or toll free at 800-444-7541.

“All of us at Springfield Clinic are excited to welcome the physicians, staff and patients of Marshall Clinic to our network of care,” said Randy Bryant, Springfield Clinic’s chief executive officer. “We have been very impressed with the high quality care and exceptional service delivered by the Marshall Clinic team. They will make excellent partners in our growing health care organization.” □

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971-7532
Owners: Nicole Dineen, Lincoln James

MotherDaughterMosaic
2929 S. Douglas Ave.
801-3189
Owners: Lauren Gleason, Paula Collier

Dina Payne MSW LCSW
917 Clocktower Drive
303-2321
Owner: Dina M Payne

Perspective Designs
1815 Seven Pines Rd
503-6139
Owner: Aaron L. Smith

C.J. & Sons Trucking
625 N. Daniels Ave
481-1126
Owner: Christopher Grant

Porter Lawn Care
12245 State Route 4, Auburn
652-1658
Owner: Derrick A. Porter

Kat Eyz
421 S. Tower Rd., Dawson
364-4179
Owner: Michael Smith

Protech Springfield Inc.
2508 Stokebridge Rd.
491-5353
Owner: Vincent L. Skaggs

Green Efficiency Creations
1915 Fairmont Drive
306-8479
Owner: Kurt A. Netznik II

Woodland Acres Mobile Home Park
3500 N Dirksen Parkway, Lot 12
523-4980 Active Date:
Owner: Ronald D. Coleman 1998 Trust

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891-2371
Owners: John D. Pickett, Joseph A. Bradford

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Owner: Brian Price

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299-1822
Owner: Bradley W. Loveless

Revamped360 Makeup Artistry and Style
1421 S. Martin Luther King Dr.
630-882-0317
Owner: Tashawna Bishop

Dark Ship Tattoo
805 N. Bruns Lane
725-1439
Owners: Nicholas J. Edwards, Amanda K. Betters, Mark A. Bradley

A Nails and Spa
1305 Wabash Ave.
546-7708
Owner: Binh Hai Cao

Grace Dean Licensed Esthetician
411 5th Street, Illiopolis
971-7857
Owner: Grace Dean

P & M Remodeling
2417 S. 6th Street
816-3409
Owner: Patrick W. Hurley II

Sugar Creek Solutions
3224 S. 2nd
553-7957
Owner: David P. Eastvold

Coneflower Cleaning Company
1708 S Lincoln Ave
761-8613
Owner: Zaida J. Diaz

Grayboy Building & Property Maintenance
600 Stonehill Dr, Sherman
502-0154
Owner: Thomas A. Gray

Phelon Public Strategies
3812 Carney Blvd
671-1970
Owner: Rikeesha V. Phelon

T. Happy Nails and Spa
3219 W. Iles Ave.
787-6699
Owner: Danny Tran

Association of Philippine Physicians In America (APPA)
8 Boulder Point Drive
494-2386
Owner: Virgilio R Pilapil

inspire
221-223 S. 6th St.
836-3247
Owner: Justine M. Kuzniar

Turasky's Catering
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RESTAURANT REVIEW



Hy-Vee Market Grille

By Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr.

I'd guess that when most people think of a grocery store it's not as a dining destination, but rather a place to get food to make meals elsewhere. And despite having multiple business lunches there since Hy-Vee opened, I never thought about reviewing it – after all, it's just a grocery store. But it's a grocery store with a restaurant worth visiting.

The Market Grille at Hy-Vee occupies the southern half of the store and has its own entrance. For being located in a grocery store, the ambiance isn't too bad. The floors are polished concrete, there are several TVs so you can catch the news or the latest game and there's a separate bar area. Patrons are seated at booths along the floor-to-ceiling windows or at tables. There's a separate entrance into the grocery store proper.

Given the exposed ceiling and concrete floor, I expected acoustics to be a problem, but that wasn't the case. We all appreciated that tables and booths were not stacked on top of each other and we never felt at risk of having our conversation overheard by other diners.

My guests and I arrived shortly before noon and were pleasantly greeted and shown to our table. Our server quickly appeared and announced the day's specials. This was the first visit for one of my guests and he was impressed with the scope of the menu. Market Grille has something for pretty much everyone, from sandwiches and salads to more traditional

entrées. We appreciated that many of those more "dinner" themed entrées (such as the pastas and the shrimp tacos) are available in lunch-sized portions between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

If you're in the mood to sample several different items, the buffet is also available. Hy-Vee has a separate area inside the grocery store for prepared foods with its own seating area that's not part of the Market Grille. Market Grille diners are provided passes entitling them to ceramic plates for buffet dining. The buffet (\$14.00) doesn't include the sushi but does include an ample salad bar, pizza, Asian offerings and more traditional buffet items like chicken, BBQ and potatoes.

Items that caught our collective eye included the Monte Cristo club sandwich (\$8.00 – turkey, ham, bacon, and mayo served on egg-dipped sourdough with spiced apple jam), the Sicilian flatbread (\$13 for the 12 inch – meatballs, sausage and fresh mozzarella and basil) and blackened shrimp tacos (\$9 for the lunch portion of two, instead of three, tacos served with grilled Cajun shrimp and cabbage slaw).

Although I opted for the buffet, my guests decided to sample a few orders of sushi and to each get an appetizer – the Colossal Wings (\$10, available boneless or traditional, with choice of sauce) and the bruschetta (\$8 – tomatoes and mozzarella on top of fresh bread brushed with garlic and topped with oil, vinegar,



PHOTO BY MARANDA POTTERF

basil and Parmesan).

The sushi came out first. The tuna tartare (\$12) was not what I was expecting – 4 ounces of five-spice dusted tuna over sushi rice, avocados, seaweed salad and lime. It was a decided hit and something I will order on my next visit. The vegetable roll (\$7 for nine pieces, \$4 for four pieces) was good but paled in comparison.

The buffet does offer quite a few options but the highlight was the salad bar. Everything you could imagine is available. However, I did note that the more expensive items were located toward the back of the bar where access was a bit difficult. I also noticed that staff appeared not to be monitoring the bar – several of the containers were perilously low during my entire visit and I never noticed the inevitable spillage being cleaned.

The other prepared foods were adequate but not as good as the made-to-order items from the menu – but that's the double edged sword of the buffet. Judging from the flow of diners, the Asian entrées and the pizza were the standouts – something confirmed by my palate.

The appetizers were very generously sized for the price. The wings were truly colossal-sized and the buffalo sauce hit just the right notes with the perfect amount of heat. The wings themselves were reported as being juicy and not overcooked.

The bruschetta was another winner and proved that there's a real benefit to having your own bakery onsite – it was the delicious bread that anchored this dish. And hats off to the Market Grille for finding some ripe tomatoes and for letting the ingredients shine by not overpowering the fish with too much balsamic.

Service was very friendly but slow – something I've observed on other visits.

Hy-Vee has done a nice job with the Market Grille and its location between downtown and the farther west side makes it a very convenient location for a business lunch. If you haven't already, you should give it a try. □

Thomas C. Pavlik is an attorney with Delano Law Offices, LLC, in Springfield.

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Professional Women's Calendar of Events

You play a key role and we thank you for your contributions to our community.

Association for Women in Communications (AWC)

AWC will meet on Wednesday, January 13th from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. Ann Strahle, Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Illinois at Springfield, made a trip to China recently. She will provide a report on her experience and observations about Chinese media. Make reservations and pay online at www.awcspringfield.com.

Women Entrepreneurs of Central Illinois (WE-CI)

WE-CI will meet on Wednesday, January 13th from 5:30-7 p.m. at Chesapeake Seafood House, 2045 Clear Lake Ave. The program, entitled "Where's the Funding," will be presented by Marica Abner, Vice President/Loan Officer at Growth Corp. The cost for the meeting is \$20 for members, \$10 for guests, and \$25 for walk-ins. Make reservations at www.we-ci.org.

Illinois Women in Leadership (IWIL)

IWIL will meet on Thursday, January 21 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sangamo Club. Sonya Jones, a 2014 Biggest Loser contestant, will be interviewed by our very own Gemma Long. Sonya has used her experience as a Biggest Loser contestant to inspire those around her to become the very best version of themselves that they can be. In February, Sonya will start her conferences for women titled "Why Not You Today?" They are designed to motivate, empower and inspire women. Reservations are available at www.iwil.biz.



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How does Springfield stack up with other cities?

By Mike Waldinger
American Institute of Architects

The above is a question that comes up often, as I have the good fortune of working for the American Institute of Architects, which shares exemplary community development work driven by design firms far and wide.

The impetus for these projects isn't just for show. Civic leaders and CEO's know that when people can live anywhere, your place in the world matters. A Harris public opinion poll asked, "What is the one overriding factor that you look for when choosing where you want to live?" Respondents voted "quality of life" highest, equal to "friends and family live there."

Market Street Services' report "Quality of Place and Its Role in Corporate Location Decisions" had this to say: "Dedicating public resources to cultural amenities, downtown improvements, bike trails and parks, and many other place-enhancing resources are the types of initiatives that can positively align with a company's talent attraction and retention efforts."

There's no shortage of ways we could make those kinds of improvements. And we have plenty of examples to guide us. Let's start with some unfinished business, such as completing Capitol Ave. from Second to Fourth Street, making it

our own version of 16th Street in Denver or Delmar Boulevard in St. Louis.

The boards could also be taken off the windows of historic properties like the Ambidexter Institute and the Lincoln Colored Home and refurbished so they could again be a beacon in the community. Successful forebears of this approach have included the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary, Edwards Place, the Elijah Iles, Maisenbacher, Pasfield and Strawbridge-Shepherd Houses which in turn followed earlier examples like the Dana-Thomas, Vachel Lindsay and Lincoln Homes.

Turning another surface parking lot into a sparkplug of new development is the vision for the Y block across from the Governor's Mansion. A chance like that comes along once in a generation. Think Power and Light District in Kansas City or Public Square in Cleveland.

We can't build over the town branch of Spring Creek but we could connect our signature civic and cultural assets with a great walking experience via the Jackson St. trail.

Is there a version of New York's Highline, Chicago's 606, Indy's Monon Trail or Atlanta's Beltline in our future? Imagine the Third St. rail corridor as a possibility.

Once the rail traffic moves to 10th St.,

we could host an indoor farmer's market in the Amtrak station like the Pike Place Market in Seattle, Eastern Market in Washington, DC or Findlay Market in Cincinnati.

Another domino that could fall with railway rerouting is Robin Roberts Stadium. Why not think about a downtown ballpark like Joliet, Lansing or St. Paul?

Is there a win-win of flood prevention with downtown green space and water features? Champaign thought so when they uncovered Boneyard Creek and created a landscaped park around the Second St. stormwater basin.

Could we take on imposing and underutilized properties like the old Pillsbury plant and the State Armory? Minneapolis wrote the book on repurposing mills and granaries while the British have a knack for turning white elephants into cultural destinations like the Tate Modern.

In almost all of these cases, we're dealing with limitations. But it's also true that within each negative lies the potential for a transformative positive. There's no reason to accept things as they are. Other communities have faced similar liabilities and turned them into assets. Why not Springfield? □



Address:
P.O. Box 398, Springfield, IL 62705
1240 S. 6th, Springfield, IL 62703

Phone:
Telephone: 217-726-6600
Fax: 217-753-2281

Website:
www.springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Email:
info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/sbjmonthly

Twitter:
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Editor and Publisher
Fletcher Farrar
fletcher@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Associate Publisher
Michelle Higginbotham
michelle@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Associate Editor
Scott Faingold
scott@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Contributors
Colin Patrick Brady Thomas C. Pavlik, Jr.
Roberta Codemo Maranda Potterf
Terry Farmer Catherine O'Connor
Gabe House Shannon O'Brien
David A. Kelm Carol Weems
Eric Woods

Production Designer
David Hine
ads@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Editorial Designer
Diane Lyddon
ads@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Business Manager
Brenda Matheis
brenda@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Administrative Assistant
Irma Wallace
irma@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

Advertising
Beth Parkes-Irwin
beth@springfieldbusinessjournal.com
Stacie Lewis
stacie@springfieldbusinessjournal.com
Teri Hill
teri@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

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What's new for 2016?

By Sarah Delano Pavlik



Although we still don't have a budget, you may be surprised to learn that the Illinois legislature and the governor have passed many new laws for 2016. Here are some highlights.

Child Custody. The words "custody" and "visitation" are being removed from Illinois statutes. Instead of awarding custody and visitation, a judge will now allocate parental responsibilities and parenting time. The decisions that were formerly a part of custody (whether joint or sole custody) such as education, health care and religion, can now be assigned to one or both parents separately. A potential downside of this new legislation is that parents may now choose to fight about each issue separately, making litigation even more time consuming and expensive.

Another significant change in the divorce arena is the elimination of "fault" divorces. Most divorces are "no fault," that is, they are based on irreconcilable differences. However, until Jan. 1, 2016, a divorce could also be brought on certain grounds such as cruelty, abandonment and adultery. These grounds are now eliminated, and all divorces will be based on irreconcilable differences.

Drugs and other substances. There are a number of new laws regarding drugs and other substances. Under a new pilot program, some pharmacies will be using prescription bottles with a combination lock for addictive painkillers like Vicodin and Norco. The locks look like the numerical locks on some suitcases. These locks

will hopefully prevent anyone other than the person for whom the medication is prescribed from accessing the painkillers.

In 2016 it will be illegal to sell powdered caffeine to anyone younger than 18 years old. Powdered alcohol will be illegal for people of all ages. It will also be illegal to possess, distribute or manufacture synthetic marijuana and synthetic K2.

Medical issues. There are also a number of new laws regarding medical issues. Terminally ill patients will have more options under the "Right to Try Act." This act allows patients with a life expectancy of two years or less to use certain experimental treatments that have passed preliminary safety tests but have not yet been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Although a patient may now have the right to try these treatments, insurance companies are not required to pay for them if not otherwise covered by their policies.

The Authorized Electronic Monitoring in Long-Term Care Facilities Act will allow families to install their own cameras and recording devices in nursing homes and certain other facilities. All residents of the room must consent to the devices, the nursing home staff must be made aware of the devices and a notice stating "This room is electronically monitored" must be posted.

The Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act requires all Illinois schools to have a concussion oversight team. Per the act, "Each concussion oversight team must

establish a return-to-play protocol, based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, for a player's return to the sponsored youth sports activity following a force or impact believed to have caused a concussion. Each concussion oversight team must include to the extent practicable at least one physician. If a youth sports league employs an athletic trainer, the athletic trainer must also be a member of the concussion oversight team."

Education. Schools will be required to repeal "zero-tolerance" policies, and suspensions and expulsions are strongly discouraged. Revisions to the Illinois School Code provide that "School officials shall limit the number and duration of expulsions and suspensions to the greatest extent practicable." Out-of-school suspensions of three days or less may be used only "if the student's continuing presence in school would pose a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students' learning opportunities." For suspensions that are longer than three days, expulsions, and/or disciplinary removals to alternative schools, the bill states these routes may be used only if "other appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions have been exhausted" and the student's presence would "pose a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or members of the school community or substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of

the school."

All schools must also install carbon monoxide detectors.

Motor Vehicles. Over 5,000 people in Illinois have been convicted of drunk driving four times. These people had previously been prohibited from ever getting a driver's license again. However, as of Jan. 1, 2016, those with four DUI convictions can receive a restricted driving permit if it can be shown that they have been alcohol and drug free for three years. If a permit is granted, the driver will still be required to use a breath ignition-interlock device to operate his vehicle.

All boaters born after Jan. 1, 1998 operating a boat with a 10 horsepower engine or greater must obtain a boating safety certificate approved by the Department of Natural Resources.

The cost of all traffic tickets will go up by \$5 to pay for police body cameras.

Bobcats. There will now be a season for bobcat hunting in Illinois. The season will be set sometime between Nov. 1, 2016, and Feb. 15, 2017. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will issue 500 permits. There will be a limit of one bobcat per person per season.

Pie. Finally, in case you were wondering, pumpkin pie is now the official state pie of Illinois. □

Sarah Delano Pavlik is an attorney with Delano Law Offices, LLC. She can be reached at sdpavlik@delanolaw.com.



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